BUDDHA

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OSAMU TEZUKA

VOLUME 6 :

Ananda

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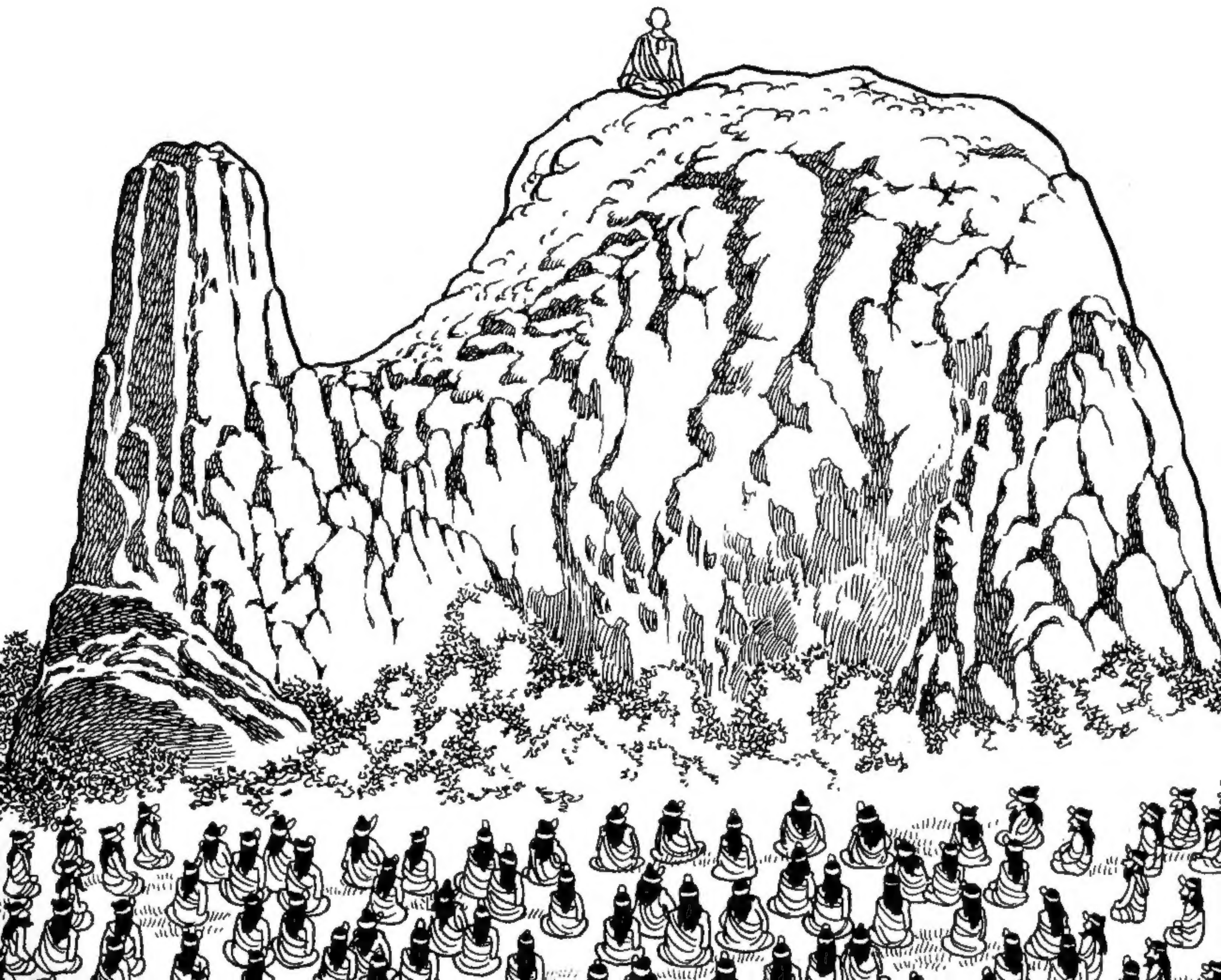
BUDDHA

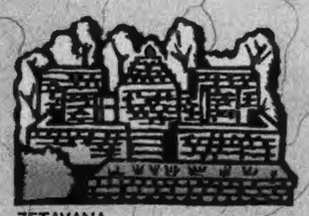
OSAMU TEZUKA

6: *Ananda*



THE JOURNEY

TIBET
NEPAL
MT. CHAMLANG
THE HIMALAYAS
MT. EVEREST
KATHMANDU
BHUTAN
ROHTAK
MEERUT
DELHI
MORADABAD
BAREILLY
ALIGARH
SHAHJAHANPUR
MATHURA
AGRA
JAIPUR
UTTAR PRADESH
CHAMBAL R.
YAMUNA R.
GWALIOR
KANPUR
LUCKNOW
KOSALA
FAIZABAD
THE GANGES
YEARS AS PRINCE
KAPILAVASTU
PLACE OF BIRTH
LUMBINI
RAMAGRAMA
CAPITAL OF KOSALA
JETAVANA
SAVATTHI
KUSINAGARA
NIRVANA
SAKETA
GORAKHPUR
MITHILA
PLAINS OF HINDUSTAN
GHAGHARA R.
SECOND COUNCIL
VAISHALI
DARBHANGA
THE GANGES RIVER
FIRST SERMON
SARNATH
DEER PARK
VARANASI
PRAYAG
ALLAHABAD
KOSAMBI
PANTNA
PATALIGRAMA
MAGADHA
BHAGALPUR
CHAMPA
NALANDA
RAJGRIHA
BIHAR
GAYA
BODH GAYA
EAGLE PEAK
LOTUS SUTRA
1ST COUNCIL, CAPITAL OF MAGADHA
ENLIGHT-ENMENT
SON R.
INDIA
BANGLADESH
THE GANGES
ASANSOL
RANCHI
BARDDHAMAN
WEST BENGAL
JAMSHEDPUR
CALCUTTA
KHARAGPUR
BAY OF BENGAL


JETAVANA

KAPILAVASTU

KUSINAGARA

DEER PARK

EAGLE PEAK

LUMBINI ANCIENT PLACE NAMES — MAJOR ROUTES — ● PLACES VISITED BY THE BUDDHA

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PART FIVE

CHAPTER ONE

ENTER ANANDA

WE GO BACK 10 YEARS...
IT WAS THE YEAR PRINCE CRYSTAL'S FATHER, KING PRASENAJIT, INVADED AND CONQUERED BUDDHA'S NATIVE COUNTRY, KAPILAVASTU.

THE KOSALAN ARMY ENSLAVED THE PEOPLE OF KAPILAVASTU AND SLAUGHTERED THEIR CHILDREN.

REFUGEES WERE HUNTED DOWN AND KILLED ON THE SPOT.

HUF HUF

HUF HUF

AH...!!
THWK
DAMN IT!
URRGH
PLISSH
PLISSH
ARRGH...

DEAR, OVER THERE, BEHIND THAT ISLET'S WEEDS!

...

WAHHH

SHHH!

OH NO!

OVER THERE. SHOWER THEM WITH ARROWS.

FSH
FSH
FSH
TUNK
P-P-P-
PLEASE, I DON'T CARE IF IT'S THE DEVIL OR A DEMON, SOMEONE SAVE US.
I'LL OFFER YOU ANYTHING. I'LL SACRIFICE ANYTHING BUT MY LIFE AS LONG AS YOU SAVE ME!
TUNK
TUNK
I'LL EVEN OFFER MY WIFE AND KID...
NO!! NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS TO ME, SAVE MY BOY!!

THAT'S ODD... ALL OUR ARROWS JUST DROPPED OFF INTO THE RIVER.

THAT'S RIDIC-ULOUS.

FZAP

PAFF

PAFF

URR

ARGH!!

OUR ARROWS ARE WHIZZING BACK TOWARD US!!

IMPOSSIBLE! IS THIS A FILM PLAYING BACKWARDS?

AIEEE

DUCK, MEN. HEAD FOR THE SHORE.

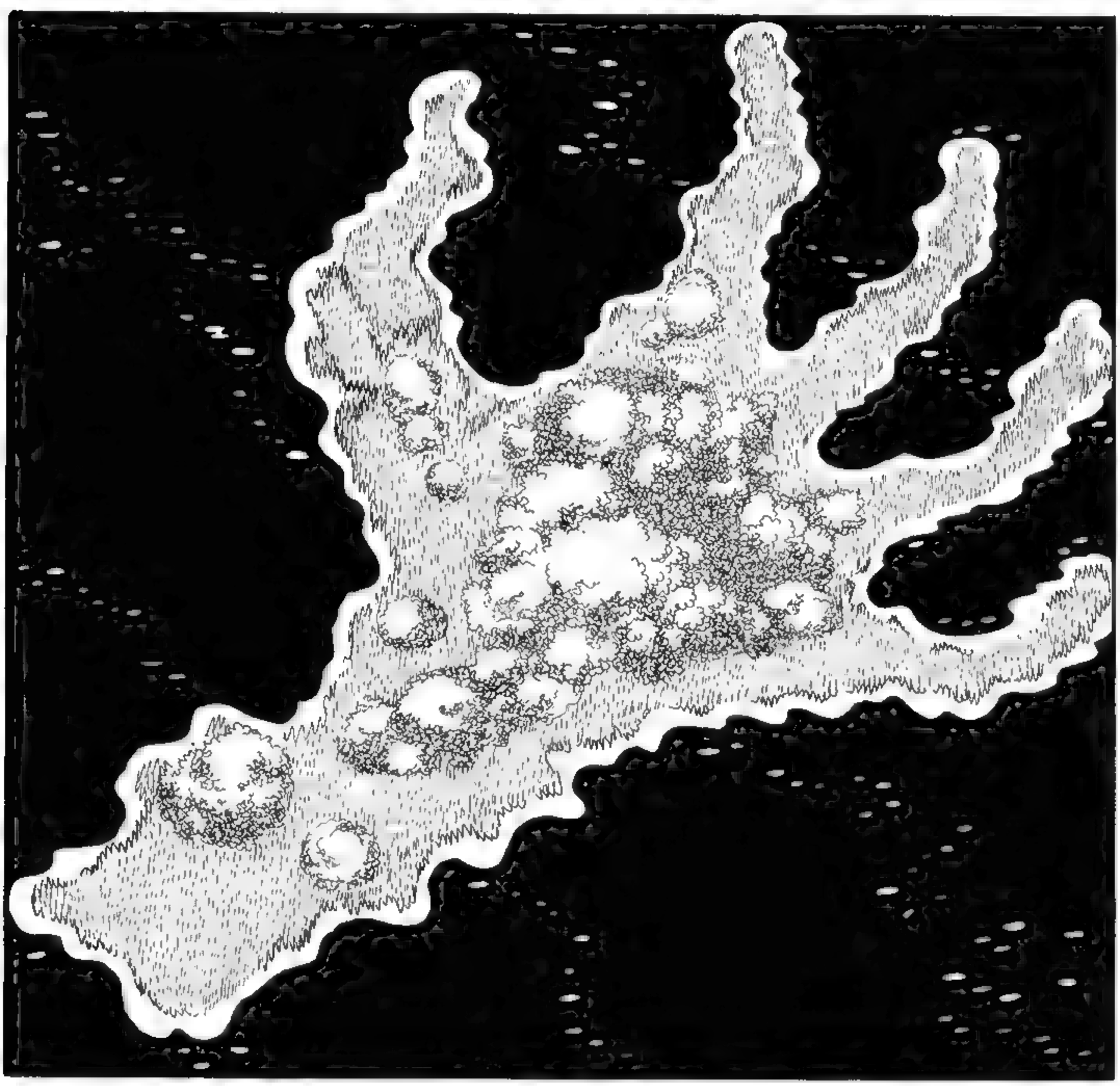
WOAAH!

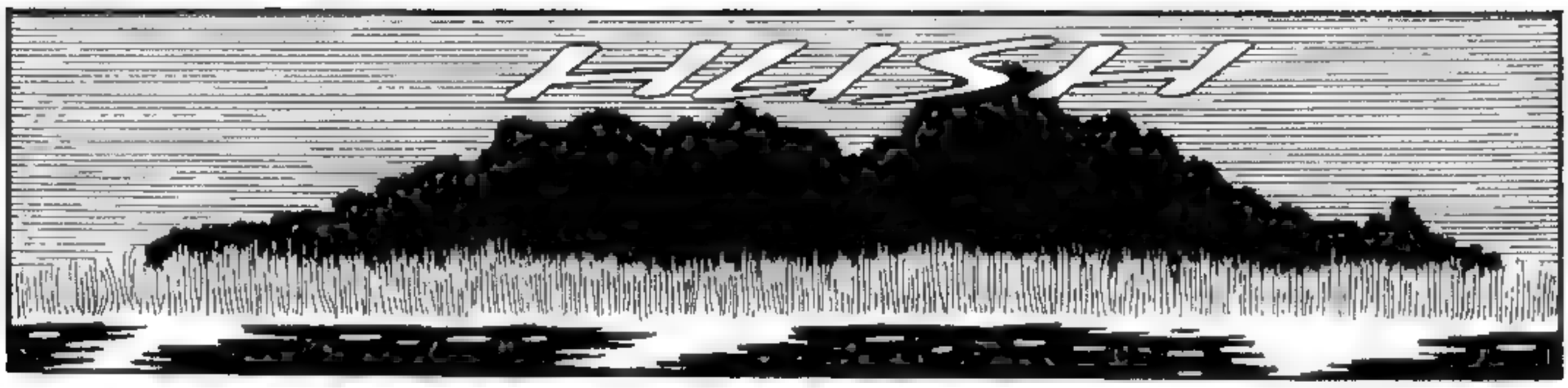
HAAK !!

WH-WHO'S DRAGGING ME DOWN ?

GLUG GLUG GLUG GLUG

WE'RE SAVED !!
THEY'VE ALL DROWNED. UNBELIEVABLE!




HUSH

THE KAPILAVASTU CASTLE, THE KING, AND THE REST OF THE ROYAL FAMILY HAVE BEEN CAPTURED ...

THOSE DAMN KOSALANS!! THEY PLAN ON WIPING OUT THE SHAKYA TRIBE!!

I WONDER IF THEY'LL COME AFTER US AGAIN.

IT'S POSSIBLE. WE SHOULD SIT TIGHT HERE.

BUT WE'LL DIE IF WE DON'T FIND SOME FOOD.

WE'LL BE FINE. WE'VE PLENTY OF NUTS AND WHEAT GRASS HERE. I COULD ALWAYS CATCH SOME FISH TOO.

THAT'S RIGHT. I SHALL PROVIDE YOU WITH FOOD.

YOU SAID YOU WOULD GIVE UP YOUR BABY ONLY A MOMENT AGO.

THAT IS WHY I SAVED YOU.

NOW OFFER HIM TO ME !!

I SHALL ENSURE YOUR SURVIVAL

AS LONG AS YOU KEEP YOUR PROMISE.

WHO'S ...

... THIS?

WH- WHAT'S THAT?

WHO ARE YOU, A KOSALAN ?

MY WORDS ARE ONLY AUDIBLE TO YOU.

OFFER YOUR CHILD. I WANT THAT BABY!!

G-GIVE ME A BREAK. I NEVER PROMISED YOU I'D HAND OVER MY PRECIOUS BABY!

SO YOUR VOW WAS A LIE ?

THAT'S RIGHT.

IF YOU GOT A BONE TO PICK WITH ME, BRING IT ON !!

TWONK

DEAR, IT WAS SO STRANGE HOW THOSE ARROWS MISSED US.

DEAR!

WHAT'S WRONG ?!

WHERE ARE YOU ?

AIEE! WHAT'S GOING ON?!

ARR...ARRR

DEAR, GRAB THIS KNIFE !!

DON'T COME NEAR ME! YOU'LL BE ATTACKED TOO.

GIANT LEECHES !!

URGH

YOUR BACK'S COVERED TOO...

DA- DAMN IT... HOW COULD THIS BE ?

BE CAREFUL. THERE'S SOME DEMON ON THIS ISLAND.

IT WANTS ANANDA.

ANANDA!!

WHERE ARE YOU?

GLUGG GLUGG GLUGG

ANANDA?!

THAT'S RIGHT. IT OFFERED TO PROTECT AND FEED US.

ANAN- DA ?

AHHH!

I DON'T GET THIS, BUT OUR BABY'S BEEN SNATCHED AWAY BECAUSE OF YOUR FOOLISH VOW...

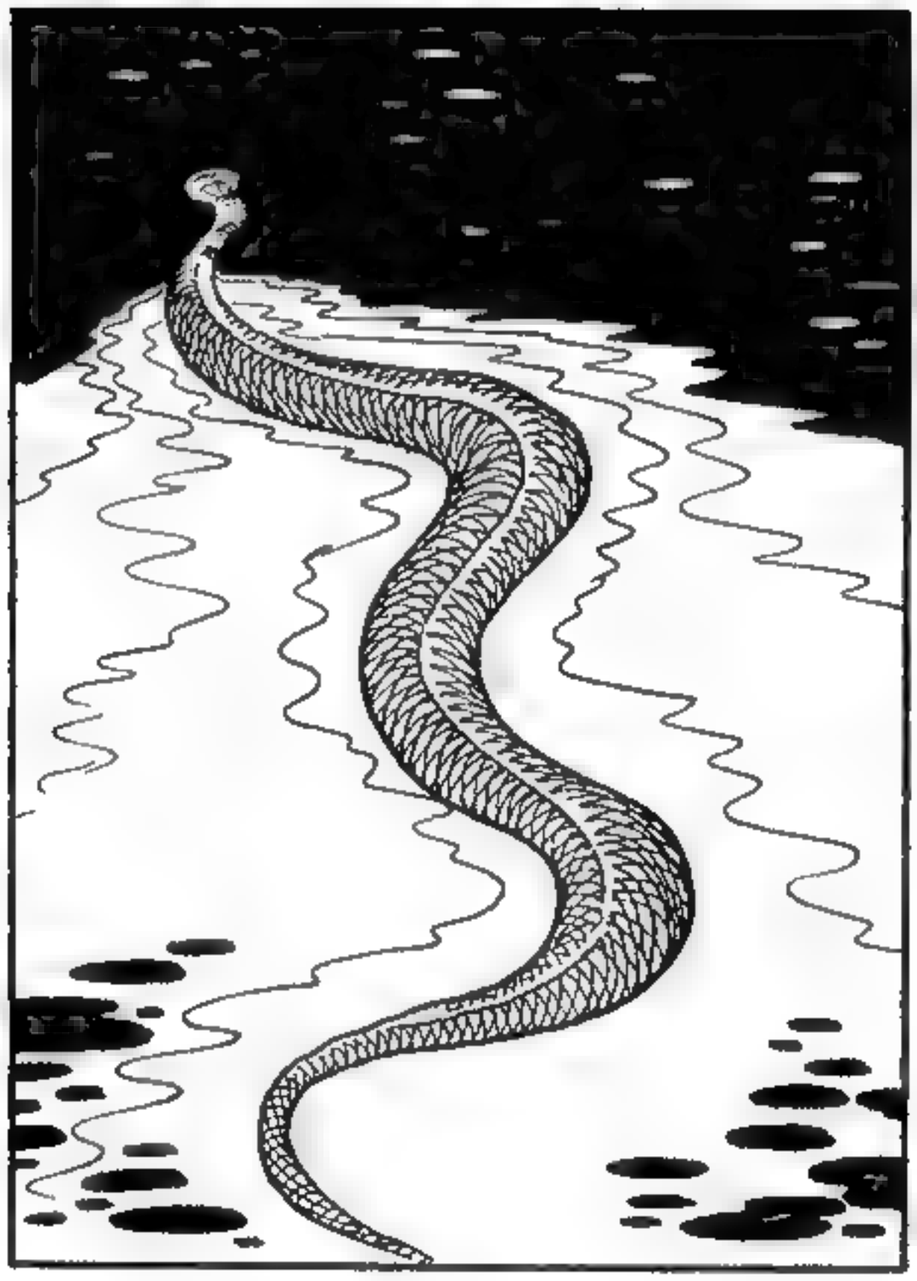
DO SOMETHING!! PLEAD FOR HIM!!

IT'S TOO LATE.

AIEEEE! THAT'S—

ANANDA!!

MY BABY ...



A WEEK LATER THE BABY'S FATHER DIED FROM THE POISONOUS LEECH WOUNDS...

HIS MOTHER ESCAPED WITH HIM. THEY DESCENDED THE LUMBINI RIVER AND HID AWAY IN THE DOWNSTREAM VILLAGE OF KUSINAGARA.

ANANDA WAS A SMART CHILD. FOR SEVERAL YEARS HE AND HIS MOTHER LED A CLANDESTINE BUT PEACEFUL LIFE IN KUSINAGARA. BUT THE KOSALAN SEARCHERS WERE PERSISTENT AND MANAGED TO TRACK THEM DOWN.

SWISH

SWISH

SWISH

THAT HOUSE!

WHUDD

HAG!! WE KNOW YOU'RE KEEPING A MOTHER AND CHILD WHO ESCAPED FROM KAPILAVASTU!!

THEY'RE SHAKYA. DON'T YOU LIE!

Y-YES IT'S TRUE.

YOU BETTER SAY WHERE OR YOU'LL SHARE THEIR FATE.

THAT ROOM OVER THERE.

ANANDA, HIDE... HURRY AND HIDE!

WHAT IS IT?

THEY'VE COME TO KILL US. GO DOWN TO THE BASEMENT!!

CHUP

THERE SHE IS! KILL HER!!

AIEEE

OH... UGH!

A...NAN...DA...

MOTHER

THERE'S SUPPOSED TO BE A BRAT.

WHERE IS HE ?

WE LET THEM LIVE FOR A DOZEN YEARS. IT'S PAYBACK TIME.

THE BASEMENT'S OVER THERE.

HM, I THINK I SMELL A KID...

STAB EVERY CONTAINER ON THE FLOOR.

SHOOP

SHOOP

SHOOP

STAB

I FELT HIM. OVER HERE.

HAH... POOR KID!

ALL RIGHT THEN, WE'RE DONE. LET'S GO.

HOLD ON, SIR. IT'S STILL RAINING...

WHY DON'T WE PLUNDER THIS PLACE SINCE WE'RE HERE?

YES ?

THERE MUST BE SOME WINE.

YOU HOGS.

OH, YOU'LL GET YOUR SHARE TOO, CAPTAIN!

WOW! THEY EVEN GOT WHISKEY.

YOU IDIOT, THIS IS MOONSHINE. YOU CAN'T EVEN TELL THE DIFFER-ENCE!

DASH

HEY, HE'S STILL ALIVE...

OOPS ...

THUNK

DAMN IT, LET US OUT!

CAPTAIN, WE'RE LOCKED IN!

THUMP THUMP THUMP

BUST THE DOOR OPEN!!

MOTHER!!

MOTHER

P-POOR MOTHER...

WEEP WEEP

SHE WAS SO GOOD TO ME. HOW COULD THEY!

IT'S BECAUSE YOU IDIOTS WERE TOO BUSY PARTYING!

YOU WERE DRINKING TOO, CAPTAIN!

WHUMP WHUMP WHUMP

WOOOA

WOOOA

NOW RIP IT OPEN WITH YOUR SPEARS!

GLUGG

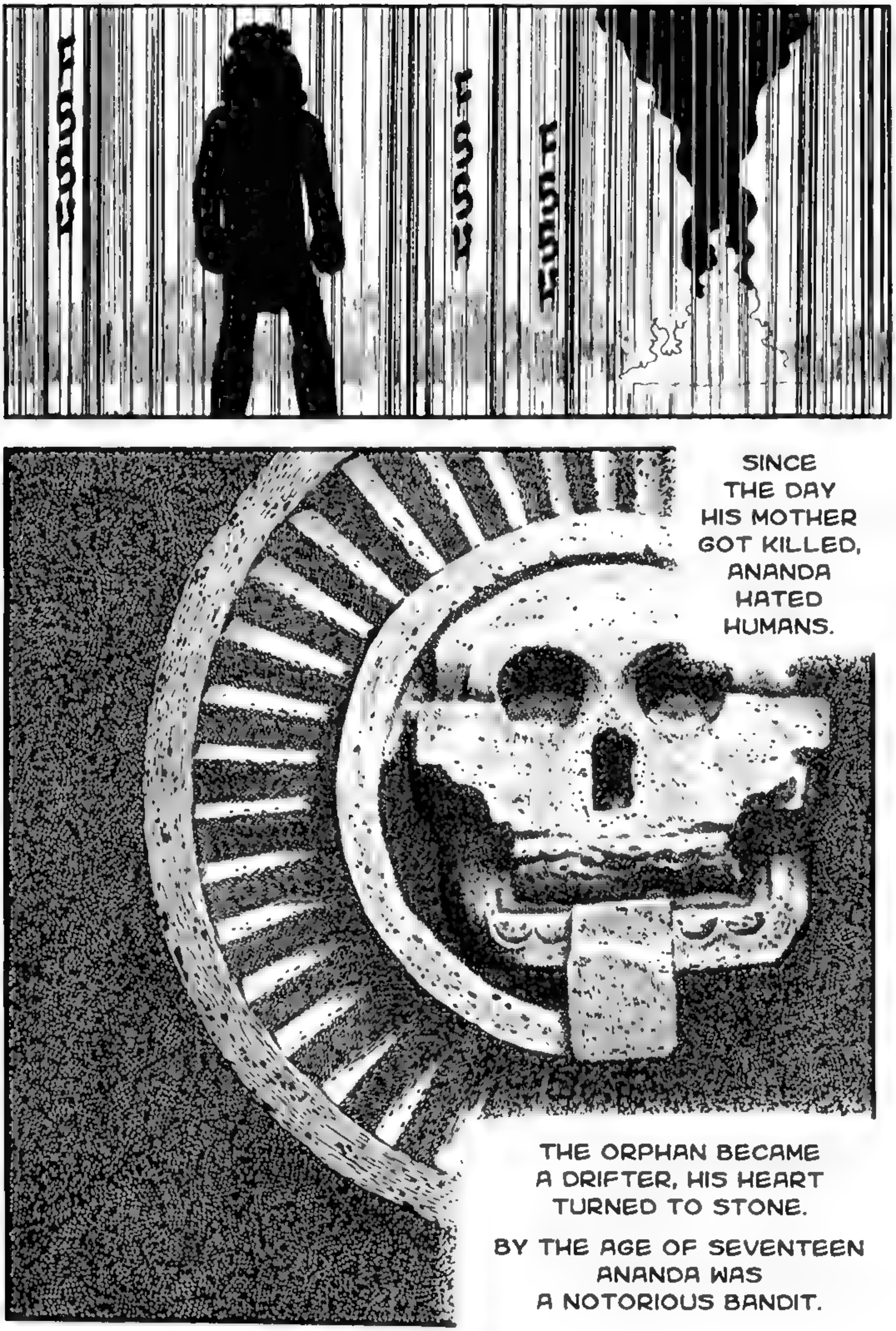
WH-WHAT ARE YOU DOING, POURING OIL ON US?

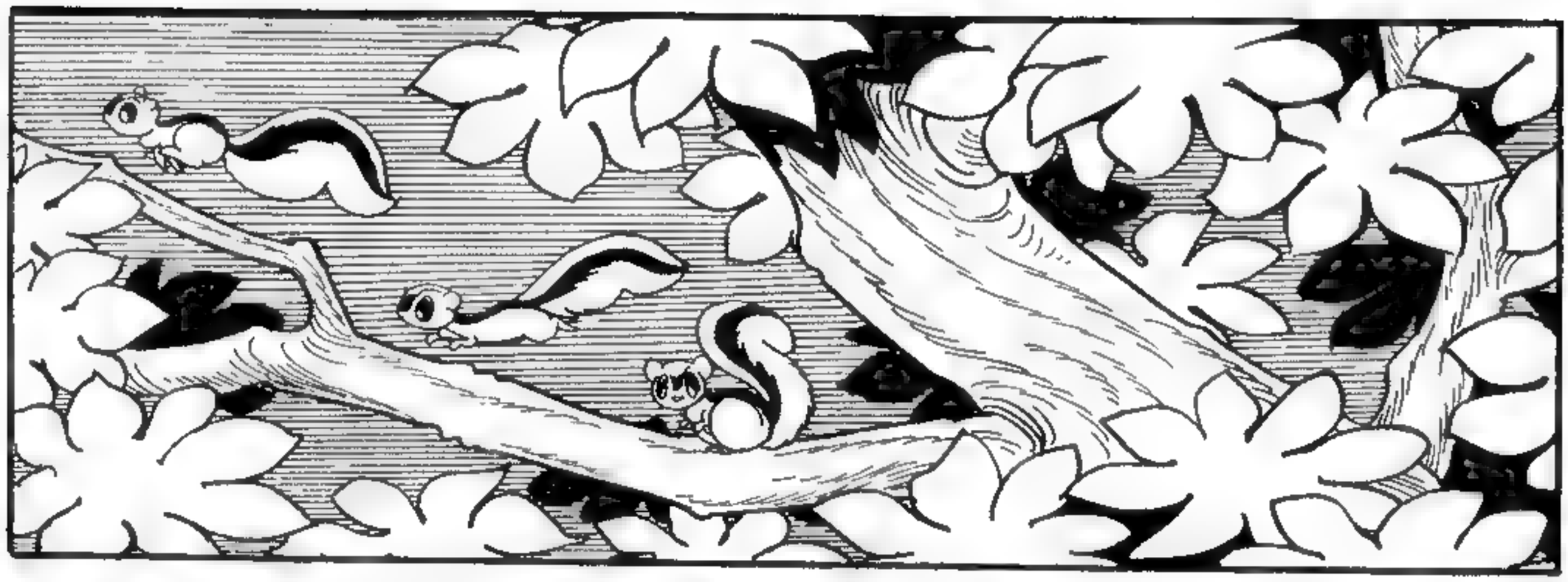
HAK HAK

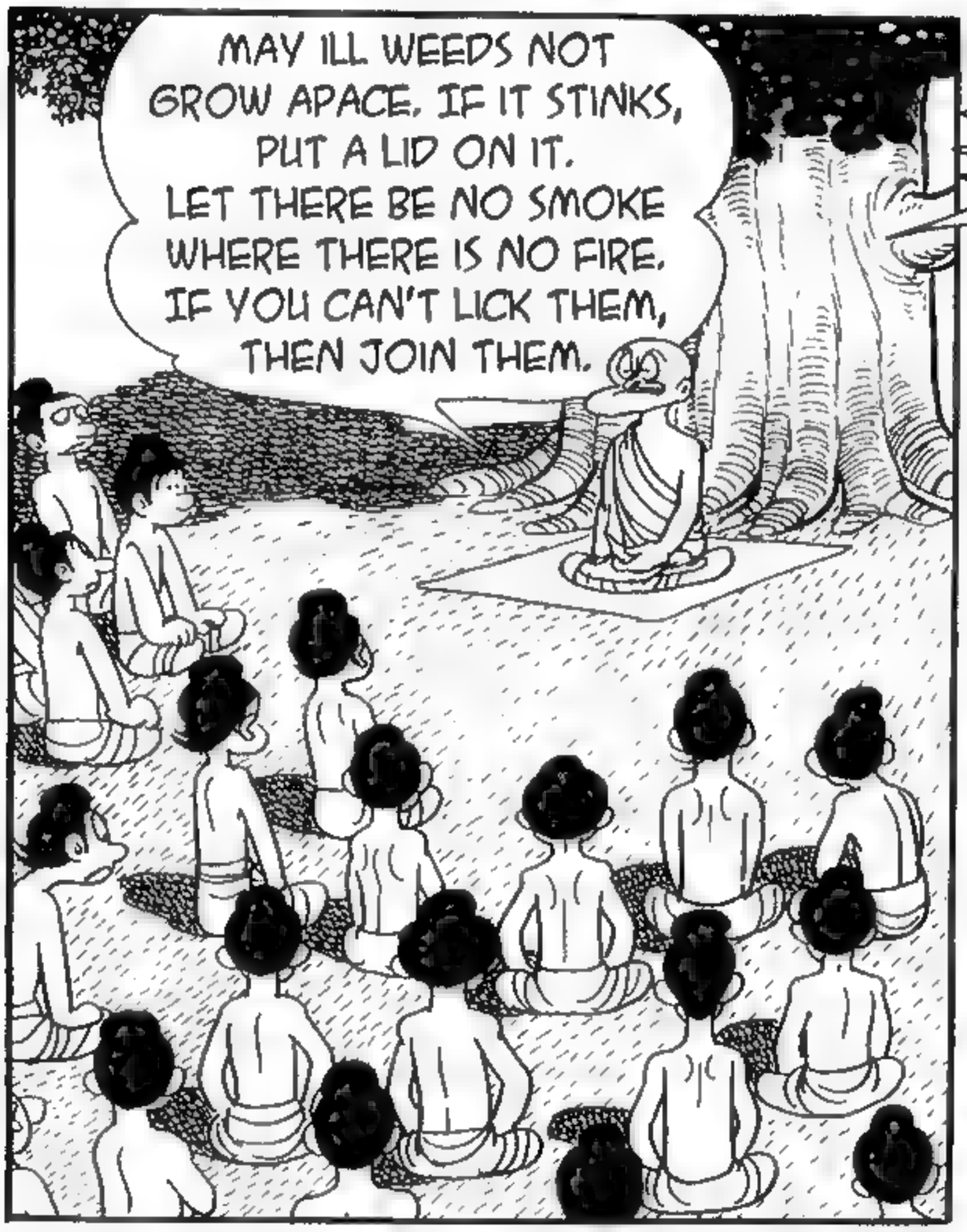
THIS IS LAMP OIL!

ARRGH
AAAAH

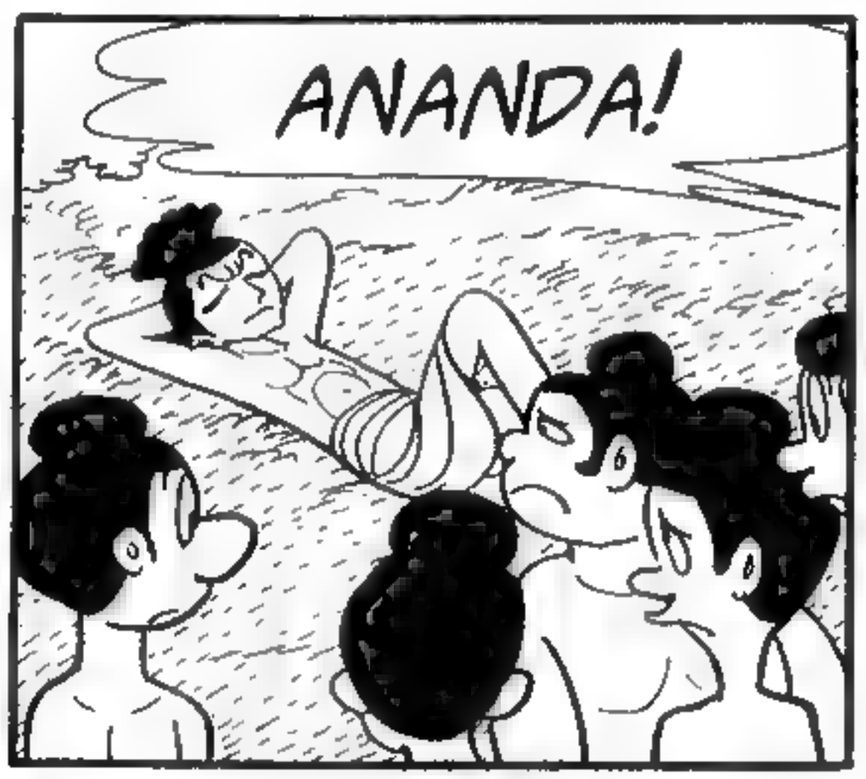
HE-LP!!

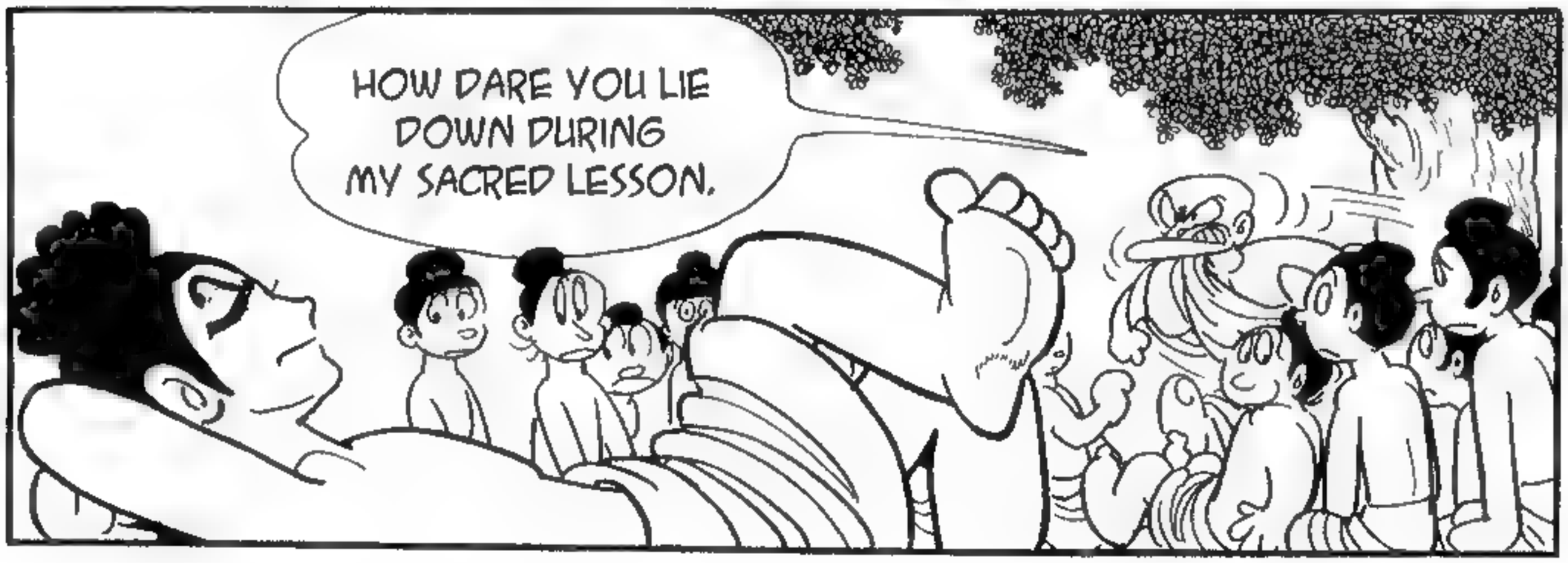

SINCE THE DAY HIS MOTHER GOT KILLED, ANANDA HATED HUMANS.
THE ORPHAN BECAME A DRIFTER, HIS HEART TURNED TO STONE.
BY THE AGE OF SEVENTEEN ANANDA WAS A NOTORIOUS BANDIT.




MAY ILL WEEDS NOT GROW APACE. IF IT STINKS, PUT A LID ON IT. LET THERE BE NO SMOKE WHERE THERE IS NO FIRE. IF YOU CAN'T LICK THEM, THEN JOIN THEM.

ANANDA


ANANDA!


HOW DARE YOU LIE DOWN DURING MY SACRED LESSON.

ANANDA, SIT UP STRAIGHT.

ARE YOU DEAF ?

YOU'RE UNEDUCATED BUT WE LET YOU ATTEND BECAUSE YOU SOUGHT GUIDANCE!

YET, NOT ONLY HAVE YOU FAILED TO PAY YOUR TUITION, YOU'VE BEEN BEHAVING OUTRA-GEOUSLY.

NOW GET UP OR ELSE ...

OR ELSE WHAT, TEACH', HUH?

URR

WERE YOU GIVING A LESSON? I COULDN'T HEAR YOU. MAYBE YOU OUGHTA SPEAK LOUDER, MASTER.

COME ON, DON'T BE SHY AND SPEAK LOUDER!

CONTINUE YOUR LESSON ...

M-MAY ILL WEEDS NOT GROW APA-APACE...

I CAN'T HEAR YOU AT ALL. MY HEARING'S NOT SO GOOD.

SPEAK UP !!

NEVER TRUST A STRANGER ...

I STILL CAN'T HEAR YOU.

LOUD -ER !

A THIEF'S NAP...

A THIEF'S N-NAP

EVEN A THIEF HAS HIS REASONS

AHH AHA

ALL RIGHT, END OF LESSON.

END CLASS NOW. THE STUDENTS ARE GETTING NERVOUS.

THAT'S ALL FOR TODAY ...

NOW OFF TO THE FACULTY ROOM.

WHAT IS THIS?!

NO BIG DEAL. JUST A DISOBEDIENT STUDENT...

WHO'S REQUESTING YOU HAND OVER YOUR TUITION DOUGH.

HURRY OR THIS MAN'S THROAT WILL BE GUSHING BLOOD.

T-TUITION ?

YOU HEARD RIGHT. DON'T WEALTHY KSHATRIYA AND VAISYA PAY A LOT OF MONEY TO SEND THEIR KIDS HERE?

D-DO AS HE SAYS.

TWEEP!

TAKE THE CHEST AND GO.

SO YOU'RE NOT ALONE...

THIS IS ORGANIZED CRIME.

ACTUALLY, WE TARGET SCHOOLS.

COME ON, ANANDA.

HE-LP

SHUT UP!

ARGH

THIS IS GETTING PRETTY DICEY. WE SHOULD PROBABLY CALL IT QUITS SOON.

NAH, THERE'S NO NEED. RAIDING SCHOOLS IS SUCH A CINCH.

BESIDES, THE SCHOOLS ARE LOADED. RICH FOLKS WILL SPEND A FORTUNE TO GET THEIR IDIOT SONS INTO GOOD SCHOOLS.

BUT WE'VE ALREADY KILLED A FEW BRAHMIN.

THE OFFICIALS ARE AFTER US.

WE SHOULD BE FINE IF WE GO DOWN-STREAM TO ANOTHER KINGDOM.

WHO SAID ANYTHING ABOUT LEAVING?

IN A FEW DAYS WE'LL RAID THE VILLAGE VAULTS.

TH-THE VILLAGE VAULTS? YOU'RE OUT OF YOUR MIND!

THEY JUST COLLECTED THE ANNUAL TAX. IT SHOULD BE LOADED WITH SACKS OF CASH.

AT LEAST 500 SACKS.

WE'LL TAKE 'EM ALL.

HOW THOUGH ?

IT'S NOT LIKE RAIDING A SCHOOL.

I ONLY DID THE SCHOOL RAIDS TO FUND THIS OPERA-TION.

NOW WE CAN FUND IT.

I WANT OUT.

YOU KNOW WHAT HAPPENS TO TRAITORS AT THIS POINT, RIGHT?

YOU GO BUY AS MANY URNS AS WE NEED TO STUFF 500 MONEY SACKS.

YOU GO BUY MERCHANTS' CLOTHES FOR THE FOUR OF US. WE HAVE TO LOOK RICH.

WE ARE OIL MERCHANTS FROM MAGADHA. WE SEEK A PASS.

ONLY REGISTERED MERCHANTS ARE ALLOWED PASSES.

IF YOU COULD SOMEHOW...

MAKE AN EXCEPTION WITH THIS ...

THIS IS CALLED A BRIBE!

ACCEPTING ONE IS KNOWN AS CORRUP-TION!

COME ON IN!

ARE YOU SURE YOU CAN STILL TURN A PROFIT?

I HAVE ANOTHER REQUEST.

WE HAVE TOO MANY HORSES TO SEEK LODGING.

COULD WE POSSIBLY SPEND THE NIGHT IN THE BACK OF THIS VILLAGE OFFICE ?

WE CAN'T ACCOMMO-DATE MERCHANTS IN THE OFFICE!

PLEASE LET US... HERE...

WHEE, THAT'S ENOUGH.

HMM, I'LL LET YOU STAY, BUT YOUR HORSES CAN'T COME IN. THEY'LL MAKE TOO MUCH NOISE.

WE SHALL DEPART BY DAWN.

THIS IS A FINE WINE FROM MAGADHA. HOW ABOUT ANOTHER CUP ?

UMM, PEOPLE WOULD SAY I'M BEING BOUGHT... A-ACCEPTING DRINKS CAN GET ME FIRED...

COME COME, HAVE ANOTHER.

WHOOSH WHOOSH

ARRGH

WOOOP

YOO,
YOO,

SHLLIP

SHLLIP

HA HA HA! ANANDA'S PLAN WORKED LIKE A CHARM.

COME ON, FILL THE URNS UP WITH THE DOUGH SO WE CAN GET OUT OF HERE.

THUD THUD WHUD WHUD

HEY, WHO'S THAT?!

WHUD WHUD WHUD WHUD

UH-OH, THEY'RE ON US!

ARRGH

UGH

ANAN
...
DA...

RUN!

ANANDA'S SCHOOL RAIDERS ARE BEHIND THIS ROBBERY.

HE'S INSIDE. CAPTURE HIM!

DAMN IT!

HE'S BY THE SAFE! GET HIM!

OVER THERE!

FSH

FSH

KLOP KLOP KLOP

OWW...
URR...

ACH!

HONH

WE FOUND THESE ARROWS IN THE THORN SHRUBS.

THEY WERE ALL DRENCHED IN BLOOD. GIVEN THE TIME FRAME, WE BELIEVE THESE WERE THE ONES THAT HIT ANANDA.

WITH SO MUCH BLOOD ON THEM, THEY SHOULD HAVE BEEN FATAL.

BUT THEY WERE ALL REMOVED...

AND ANANDA'S CORPSE IS NOWHERE IN SIGHT!

IN FACT, WE FOUND HIS FOOTPRINTS! HE MUST HAVE SURVIVED AND ESCAPED.

IN OTHER WORDS, ANANDA HAS THE ABILITY TO RECOVER FROM FATAL INJURIES...

THAT CAN'T BE...

IF THIS IS TRUE THEN THAT BRUTAL VILLAIN...

...CAN'T BE STOPPED NO MATTER HOW MANY TIMES WE KILL HIM.

WITNESS A, SIR.

SPEAK, WITNESS A.

I'S PARTNERS WITH ANANDA TWO AGO. WE HAD A FALLIN' OUT.

WE HAD A SWORD-FIGHT AND...

I CHOPPED OFF ONE OF HIS LEFT FINGERS.

BUT I SEEN HIM A MONTH LATER...

AND HE HAD ALL FIVE FINGERS.

SO YOU'RE SAYING HIS CHOPPED FINGER GREW BACK.

YES, SIR.

IN BIOLOGICAL TERMS IT'S CALLED REGEN-ERATION.

IT MUST BE SORCERY. ANANDA IS THE DEVIL INCARNATE.

THAT'S RIGHT, HE'S A DEMON!

IN ANY CASE, WE MUST CAPTURE AND KILL ANANDA IMMEDIATELY. BUT IF HE *IS* IMMORTAL...

...WHAT CAN WE DO?

HOW ABOUT BEHEADING HIM IMMEDIATELY AFTER CAPTURING HIM?

HIS HEAD MIGHT JUST GROW BACK.

HA HA HA... NO NEED TO WORRY. THIS IS MUCH EASIER THAN IT SEEMS.

HEH

EVEN A DEMON HAS A WEAK SPOT.

BESIDES, ANANDA'S JUST A KID.

PAMPAS

YOU BOAST, BUT DO YOU HAVE SOME PLAN?

WELL...

I MAY.

BUT WHAT WOULD I GAIN SHARING IT?

THERE ARE OFFICIALS WHO AREN'T VERY DISCREET...

ANANDA MIGHT GET WIND OF OUR PLAN THANKS TO THEM.

GLARE

IF YOU LET ME HANDLE THIS MY OWN WAY,

I PROMISE I'LL GET RID OF ANANDA IN A WEEK.

A WEEK? HM! FINE.

WELL, GENTLEMEN? SHALL WE ASSIGN DETECTIVE PAMPAS TO THIS CASE?

NO OBJEC-TION !

HE MUST HAVE SOME EYE-POPPIN' IDEA!

DEAR READER, I BET YOU'RE WONDERING WHAT MY BRILLIANT PLAN IS.

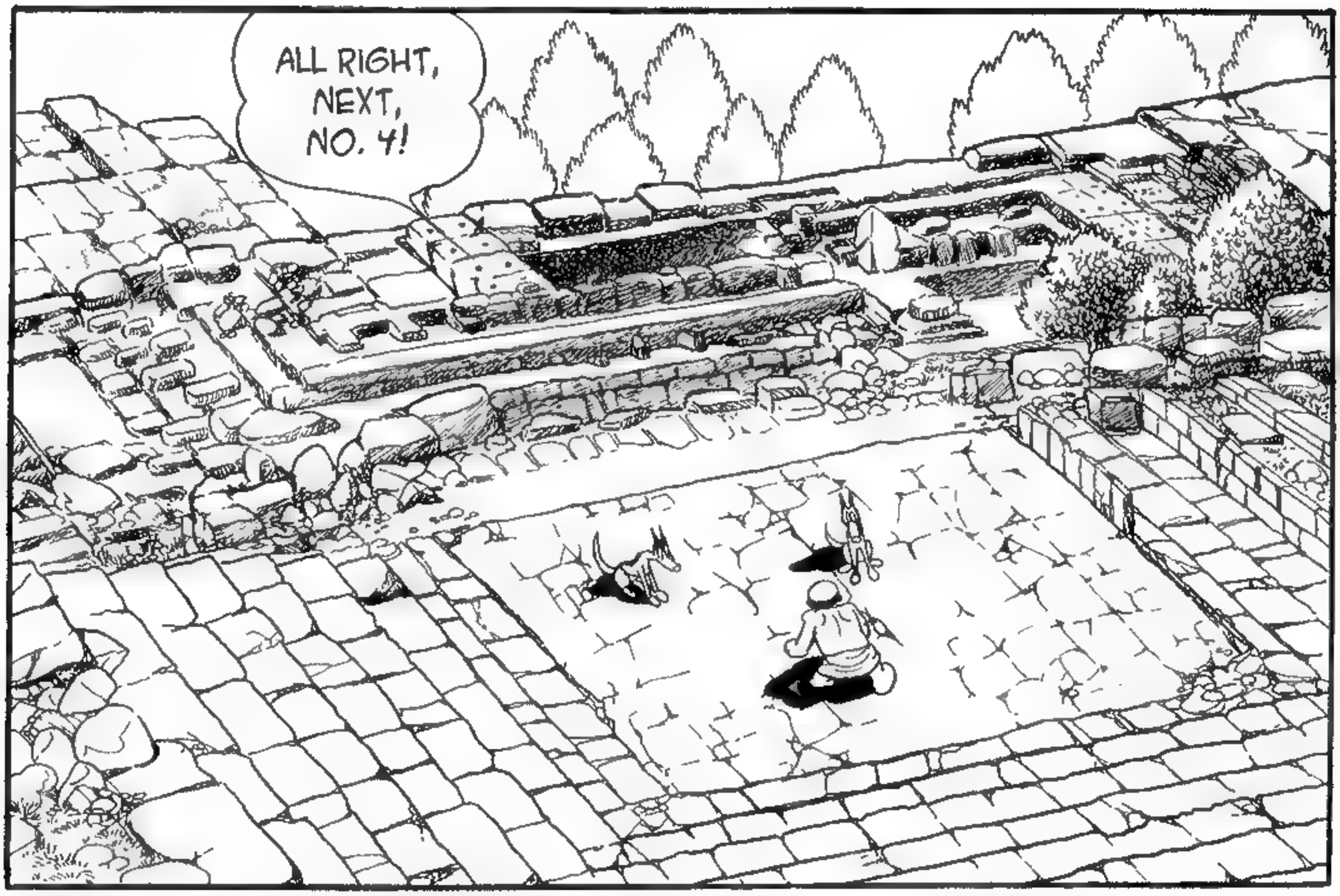
HERE'S A HINT. I'M GONNA USE ANIMALS INSTEAD OF HUMANS!

THE PRICE OF UNDERESTIMATING ANANDA WON'T BE CHEAP.

OH, I'M ALL SET, CHIEF.

CHAPTER TWO

DETECTIVE PAMPAS


ALL RIGHT, NEXT, NO. 4!

SOMERSAULT !!

NICE WORK, DETEC-TIVE.
OH, GOOD MORNING, CHIEF.

YOU'VE BEEN TRAINING DOGS SINCE OUR MEETING.
AH, THESE CHAPS GROW ON YOU FAST.

JUMP !!

SUPER SPIN!

HIGH JUMP !!

ULTRA-JUMP!

STOP

YOU'VE BEEN TRAINING DOGS TO ATTACK THE IMMORTAL ANANDA.

YES, THIS IS THE ORIGIN OF K-9'S.

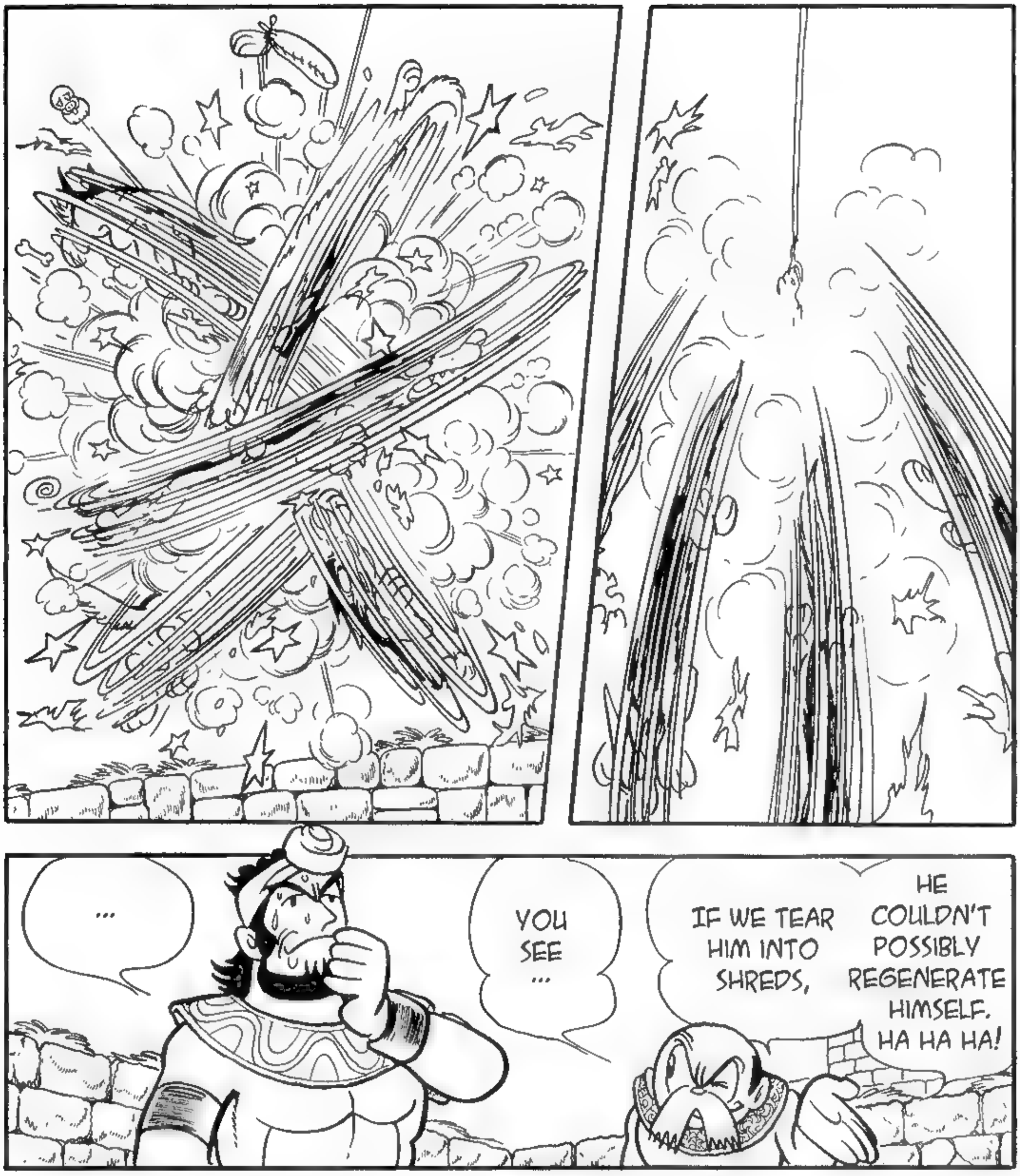
I'M SORRY, BUT THIS WON'T WORK, DETECTIVE PAMPAS.

ANANDA WILL REVIVE...

EVEN IF HIS HEAD AND LIMBS ARE TORN OFF!

YOU THINK SO ?

AT-TACK !!


...
YOU SEE ...
IF WE TEAR HIM INTO SHREDS,
HE COULDN'T POSSIBLY REGENERATE HIMSELF. HA HA HA!

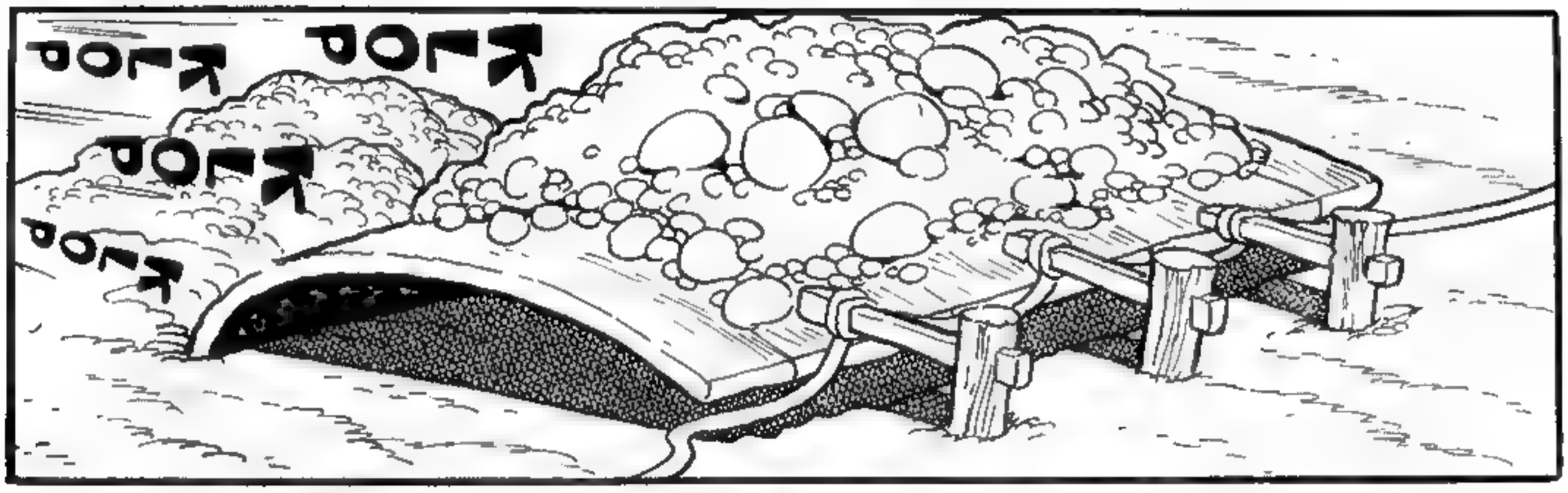
NO MATTER HOW INVINCIBLE HE IS, HE CAN'T DO MUCH WITHOUT A BODY!

I SEE... BUT IT'S RATHER SAVAGE. I FEEL A LITTLE SICK...
LEAVE IT TO MY DOGS.

OBLIVIOUS TO HIS PURSUER'S CHILLING INTENT, THE PURSUED, ANANDA, WAS BUSY TARGETING A RICH LITTLE LAMB.

KLOP... KLOP...

DOFK DOFK DOFK DOFK

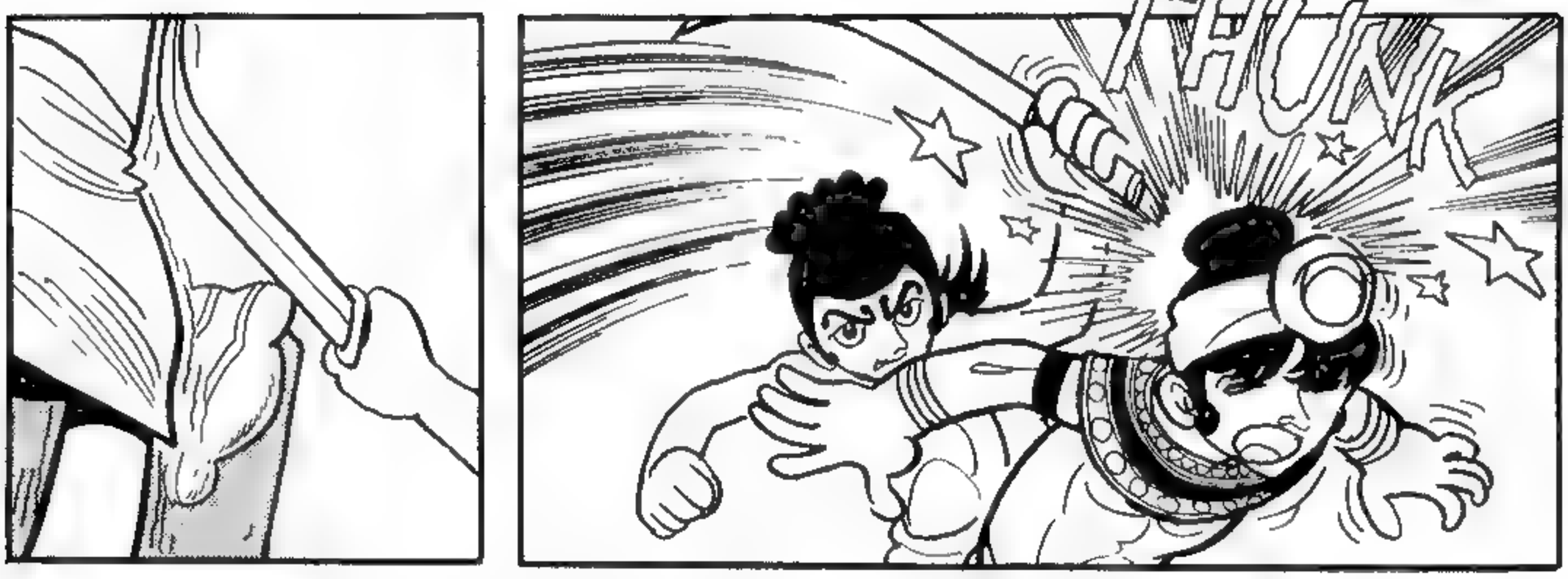

TUG6
CHUD
ARRGH!!
FSSSHHH

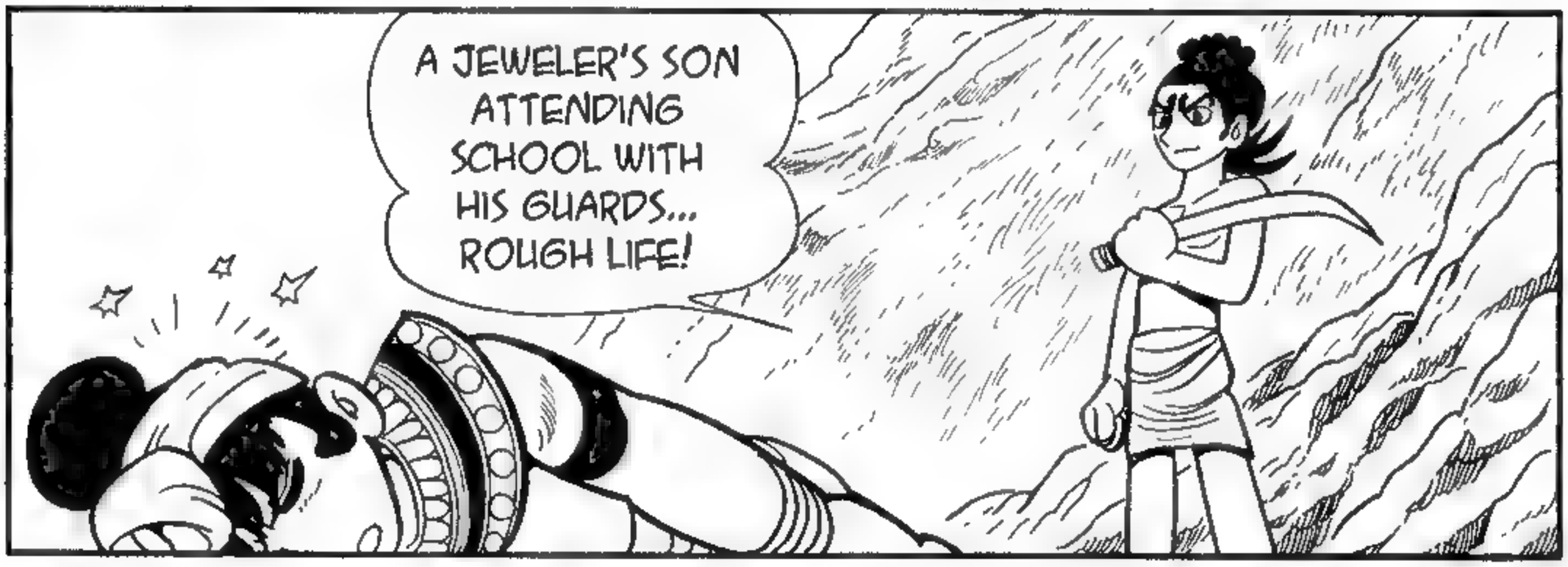
AHH !!

BRRR! NEIGH!

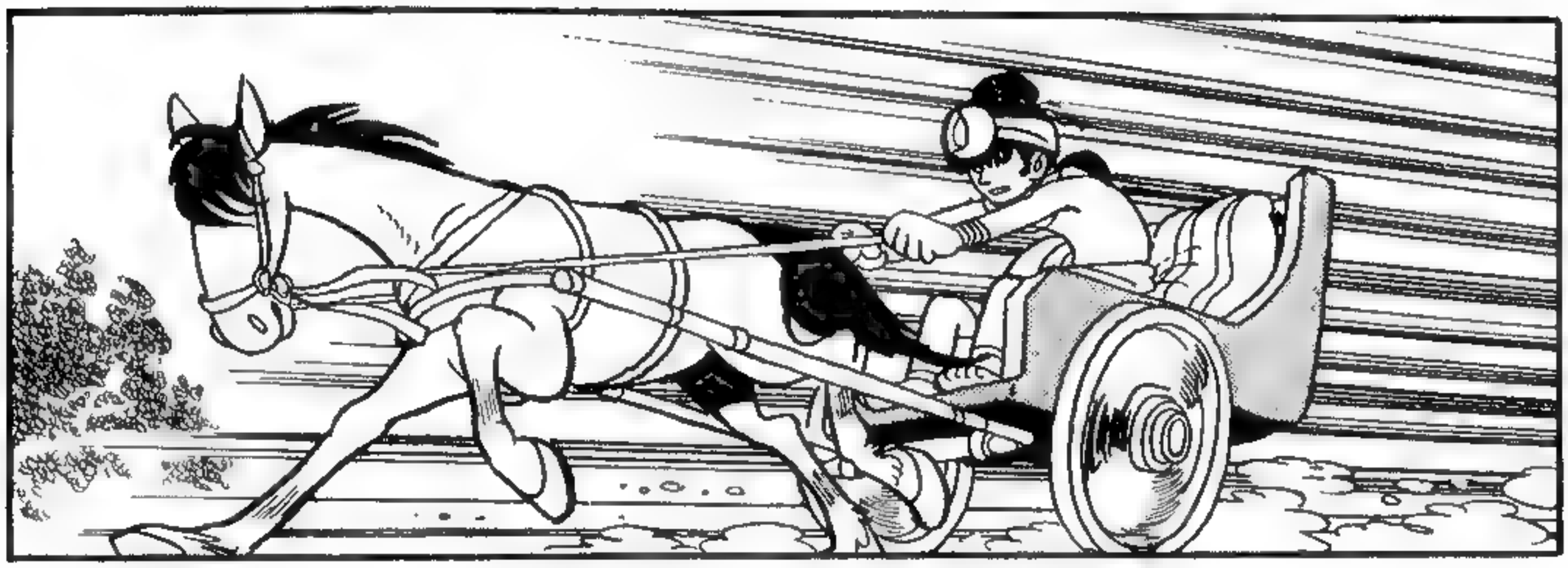
THUD

GET OFF


THUNK


A JEWELER'S SON ATTENDING SCHOOL WITH HIS GUARDS... ROUGH LIFE!

I'LL KEEP YOU HOS- TAGE,
JUST IN CASE.



AH, THE YOUNG MASTER!

ALL ALONE!

WHERE ARE YOUR GUARDS?

A ROCKSLIDE KNOCKED THEM OVER THE CLIFF.

A ROCKSLIDE ?!

INFORM THE MASTER.

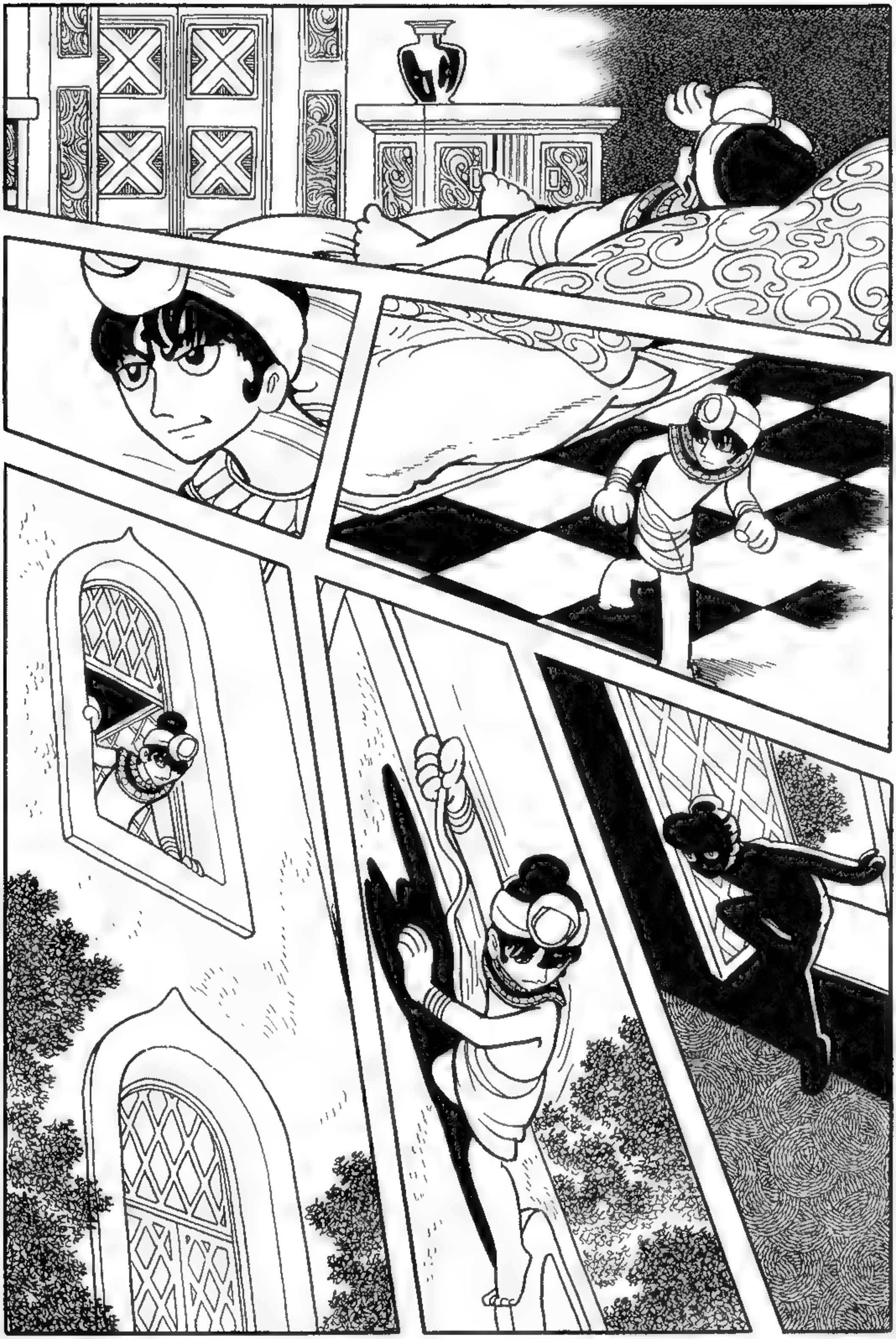
WE HAVE TO GO RESCUE THEM.

OH, THAT MUST HAVE BEEN HORRIBLE.

WE'LL GET YOU A DOCTOR ...

I DON'T FEEL WELL. PLEASE LEAVE ME ALONE.

I'LL BE ALL RIGHT. I JUST NEED SOME REST.



I POSE AS THE MASTER'S SPOILED SON...

...AND FIND THE GEM VAULT LOCATED RIGHT UNDER HIS ROOM. HEH HEH, IT'S ALL MINE NOW.

SQUAW

ARGH!! WHAT THE...

ARE YOU ALL RIGHT, SIR?!

YOU'VE ALWAYS LOVED THAT PARROT...

DAMN!

TSK

AIEE! HE ISN'T THE YOUNG MASTER!

SOME-BODY HELP! THIEF!!

IT'S ANANDA!!

HE'S TAKEN ALL THE JEWELRY!!

SO THEY'VE FOUND OUT... WELL, AT LEAST I GOT THE GOODS.

POZ POZ POZ POZ

DRR DRR DRR DRR

ADOLF ADOLF ADOLF ADOLF

DAMN, NOW THEIR DOGS ARE ON ME.

GRR GRR GRR GRR

ADOLF ADOLF ADOLF ADOLF

KLOP KLOP KLOP KLOP

EGADS

THE INVINCIBLE ANANDA! GETS THROWN OFF HIS HORSE AND DOESN'T EVEN BREAK A BONE. HAH!

I'M DETECTIVE PAMPAS. I ALWAYS HUNT DOWN MY PREY!

YOU'VE SURVIVED EVERY WOUND, YOU BASTARD.

BUT NOT SO THIS TIME... BE GOOD AND SURRENDER!

I HAVE TO DESTROY YOU, IT SEEMS.

BUMPKIN COP TAMES SOME STRAY DOGS AND THINKS HE'S KING! THIS IS GOOD...

RRRL

RRRL

THESE DOGS WILL TEAR YOU APART TO SHREDS. NO MORE REGENERATION FOR YOU!

ARR

ARR...

ARR

SICK HIM !!

URR

URR

ENOUGH GROWLING! ATTACK! NO MERCY!

WHAT'S WRONG?! WHAT ARE YOU AFRAID OF?!

ATTACK HIM LIKE I TRAINED YOU TO!

UH...UR

YELP

YELP!

WHINE

H-HEY, D-DON'T RUN? WHY?!

WHERE ARE YOU GOING NOW?!

YELP

WHINE

YOU BASTARD...

HAVE A TASTE OF THIS !

WHAT WAS THAT SPELL YOU PUT ON MY DOGS, YOU DAMN SORCERER?

EEP...

NEIGH!

I'LL BE BACK!!

...

KRRR

KRRR

KRRR

KRRR

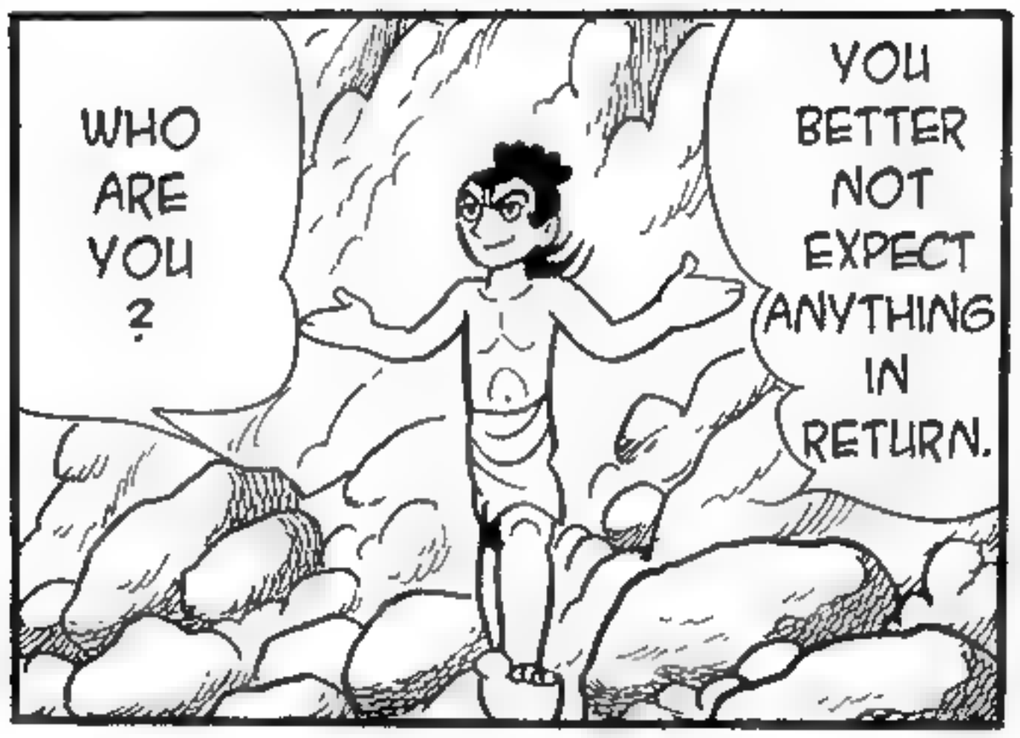
I DON'T KNOW WHO YOU ARE, BUT YOU SAVE ME EVERY TIME I'M IN A JAM...

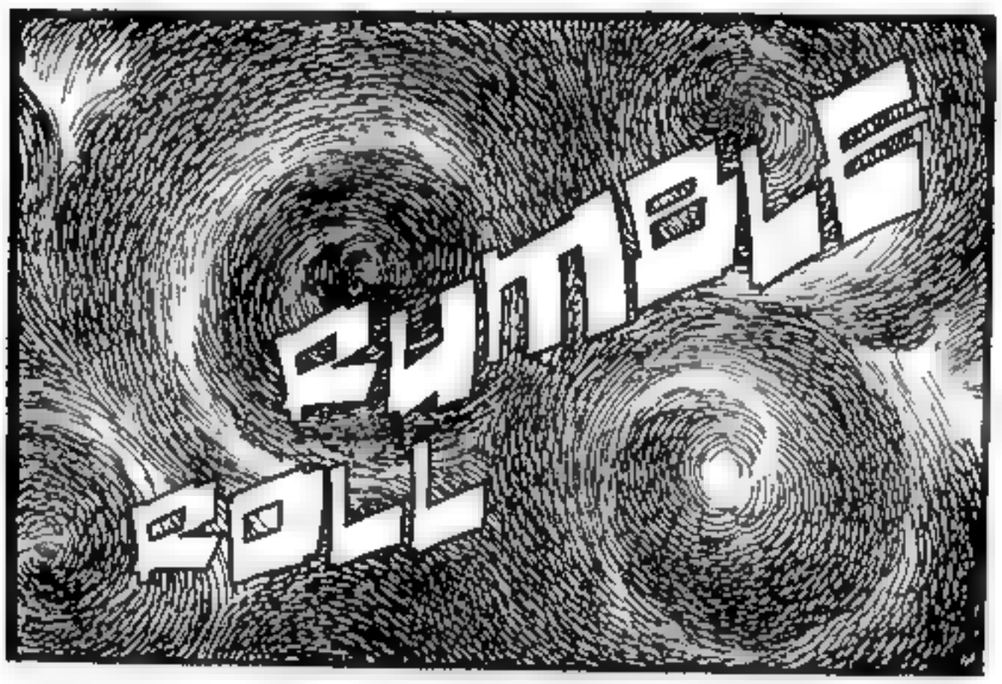
YOU CHASED AWAY THE DOGS TODAY,

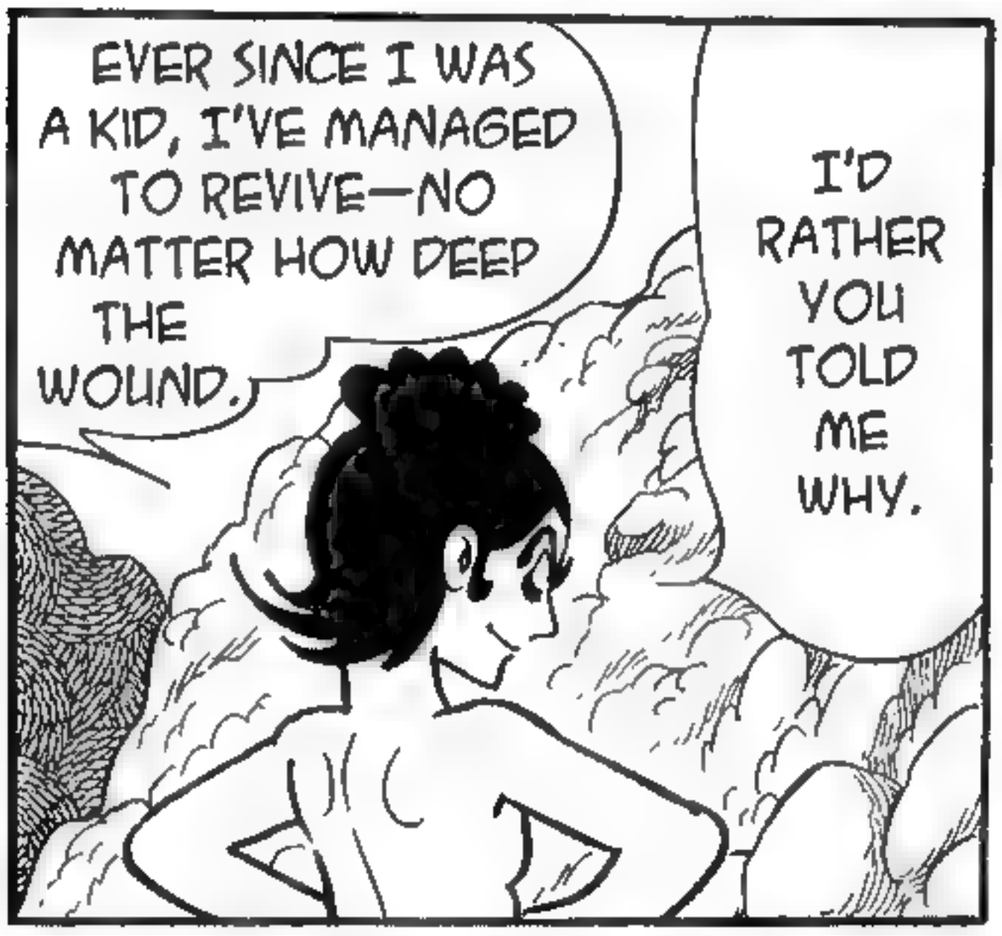
YOU ZAPPED THAT COP WITH LIGHTNING.

BUT WHY?

WHY DO YOU LOOK AFTER ME?


WHO ARE YOU?
YOU BETTER NOT EXPECT ANYTHING IN RETURN.


CUMBLE COLL


EVER SINCE I WAS A KID, I'VE MANAGED TO REVIVE—NO MATTER HOW DEEP THE WOUND.
I'D RATHER YOU TOLD ME WHY.

ZAKK!!

ZAKK!!
ZANNNG

AT LAST YOU SHOW YOURSELF, MASTERMIND.

MMM... CHEEKY, AREN'T YOU ?

EIGHT DAYS AFTER YOU WERE BORN, YOU RECEIVED MY BAPTISM.

I AM THEREFORE YOUR GUARDIAN.

WHAT'S THIS? SO IT WAS A WOMAN ?

HAH,

GIVE ME A BREAK!

DON'T MAKE ME LAUGH

YOU OLD MA!

YOU WERE OFFERED TO ME. SO YOU MUST FULFILL MY WISH...

UNTIL THEN I'LL ENSURE YOUR SURVIVAL. I SHALL PROTECT YOU.

YOU WILL EVENTUALLY ENCOUNTER YOUR ENEMY. IF YOU LOSE, THEN I LOSE, TOO.

I GOT NO IDEA WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT...

WHO'S YOUR ENEMY, MA? I DON'T WANT ANY PART OF SOME CATFIGHT.

THE ENEMY IS CALLED BUDDHA!

REMEMBER THAT NAME.

BUDDHA? WEIRD NAME. IS IT A GUY?

LOOK HERE, MA. I GOT NOTHING TO DO WITH THIS BUDDHA. I CAN'T STAND WORKING FOR ANYONE!

I LIVE THE WAY I WANT. NOW GET LOST!

MMM... SUCH A SPIRITED FOOL WE ARE !

AH, SHUT UP

TAKE THIS!

FSH

FSH

ARRGH

OWW

OUCH

MHA-HA-HA! KNOW THY LIMITS!

OH, SO WHAT IF YOU KNOW A LITTLE MAGIC. I'M NOT IMPRESSED.

KNOT

DAMN YOU !!

THE OPPONENT YOU'LL FACE LIVES IN A PLACE CALLED MIGADAYA.

NO NEED TO RUSH. YOU ARE DESTINED TO MEET HIM.

REMEMBER WELL, THE NAME IS BUDDHA!

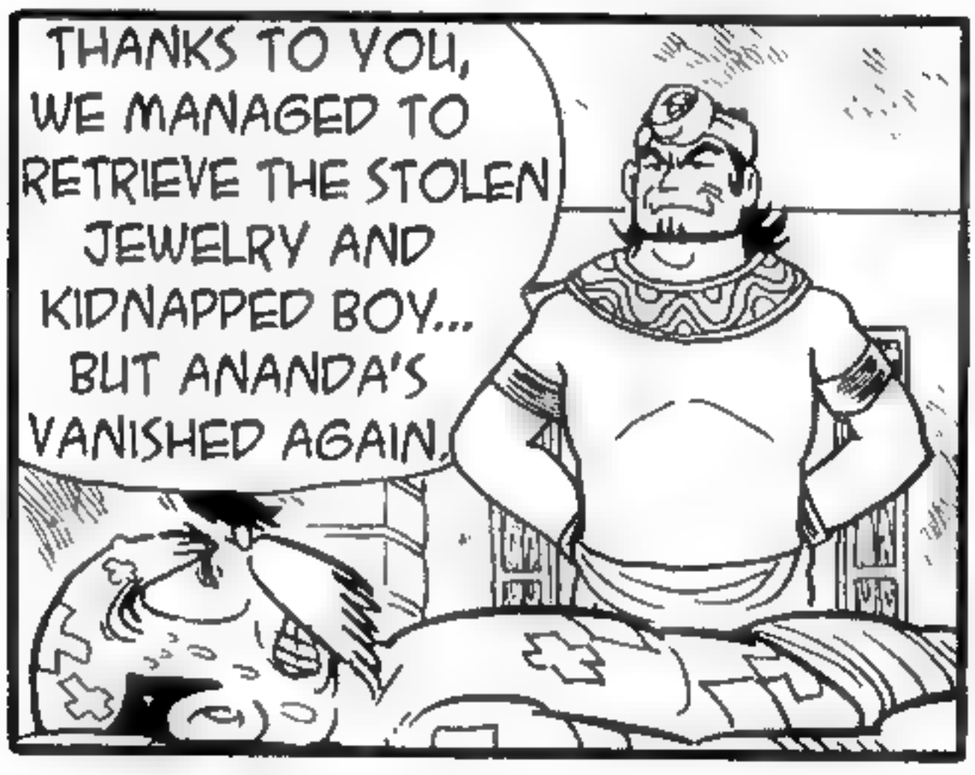
MHAHAHAHAHAHA

WHO CARES ABOUT BUDDHA! IT'S NONE OF MY BUSINESS.

GET OUT OF MY FACE, YOU HAG!

EEK! IT STINGS ...!

I WAS STRUCK BY LIGHTNING WHEN I TRIED TO CUT HIM DOWN... ...OWW
YOU NEED TO REST. I'LL BRING THE CASE UP AT THE VILLAGE MEETING AGAIN.


THANKS TO YOU, WE MANAGED TO RETRIEVE THE STOLEN JEWELRY AND KIDNAPPED BOY... BUT ANANDA'S VANISHED AGAIN.

REST? NO WAY! I SWORE I'D KILL HIM IN A WEEK.
I STILL HAVE THREE DAYS. COME ON !
YOU'RE AN INVALID. YOU CAN'T.

I'LL HUNT HIM DOWN IN THREE DAYS!
I CAN'T STAY PUT HERE.

ACH...THIS SLIMY OINTMENT IS GOD-AWFUL!
TAKE IT EASY, NOW...

CHAPTER THREE

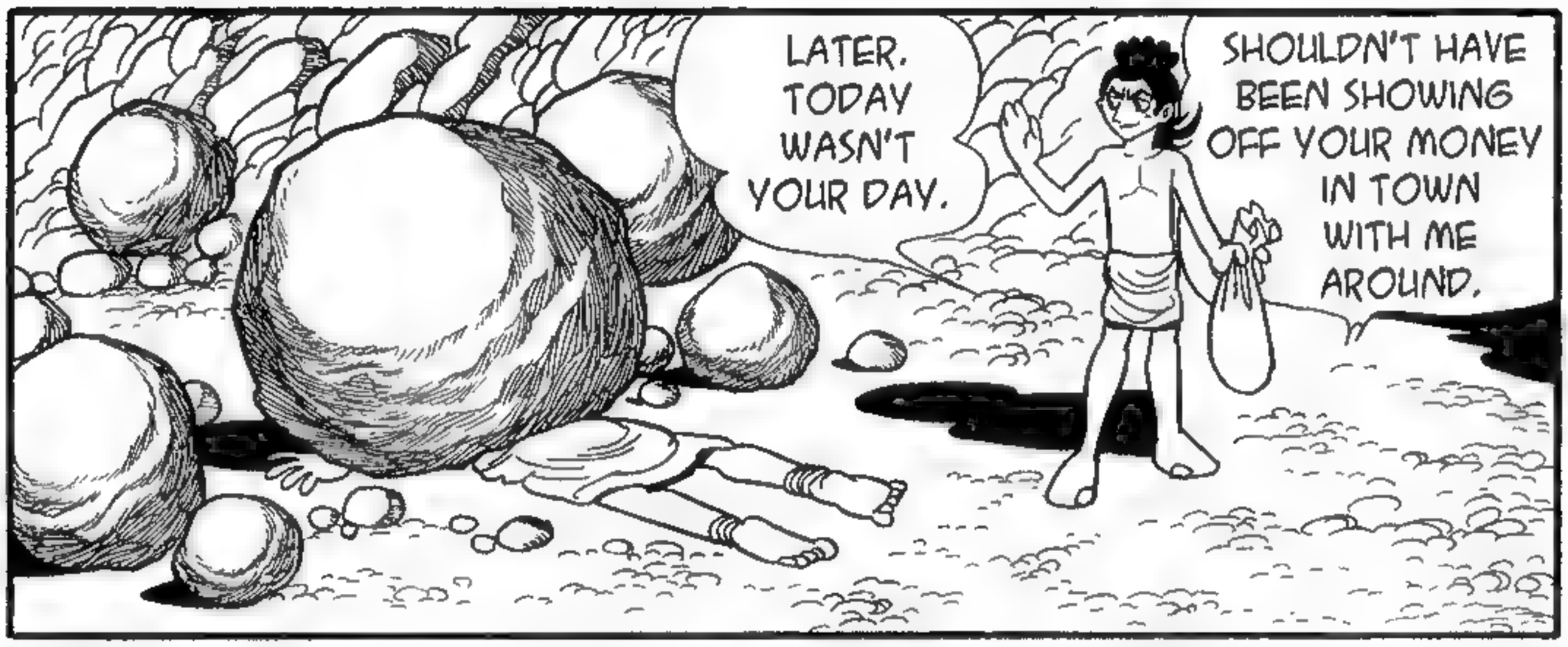
Lata

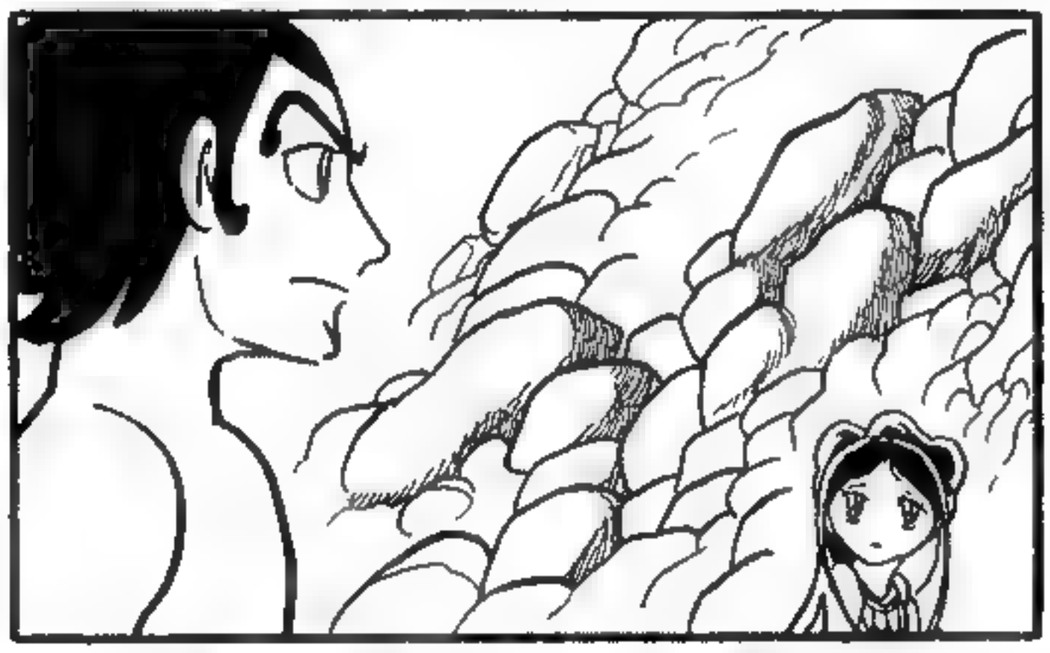
ANANDA CONTINUED TO MURDER AND PLUNDER.

WHAT A WAY TO GO.

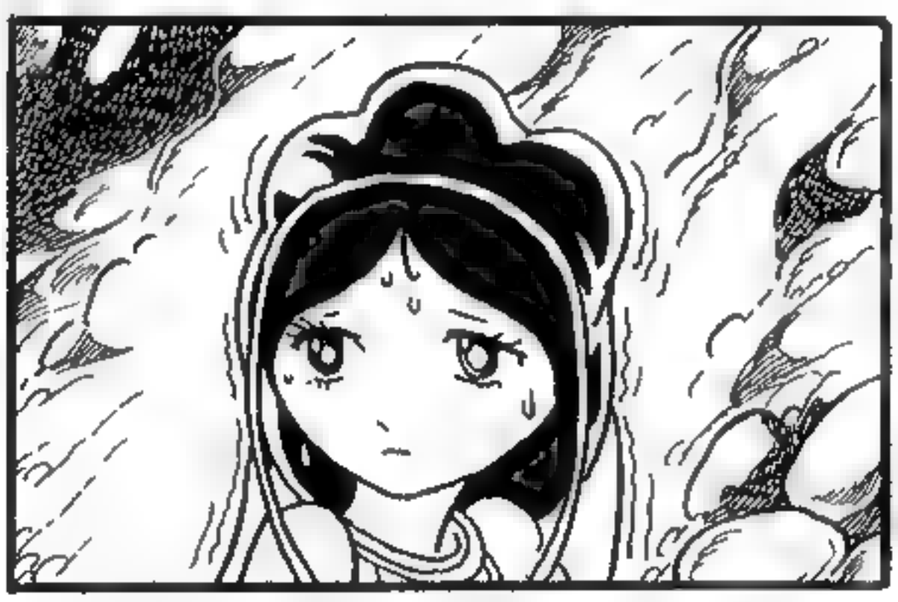
HEH... NOT BAD FOR A DAY'S WORK.

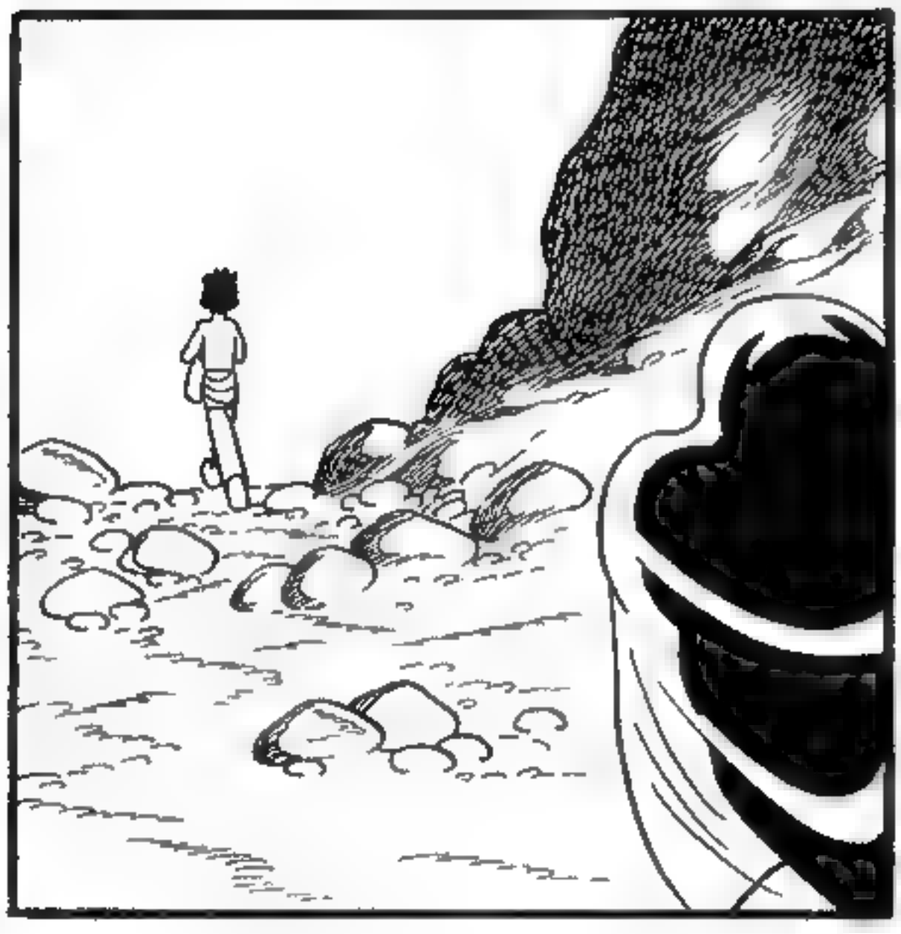
KLAK KLAK KLAK


LATER. TODAY WASN'T YOUR DAY.
SHOULDN'T HAVE BEEN SHOWING OFF YOUR MONEY IN TOWN WITH ME AROUND.

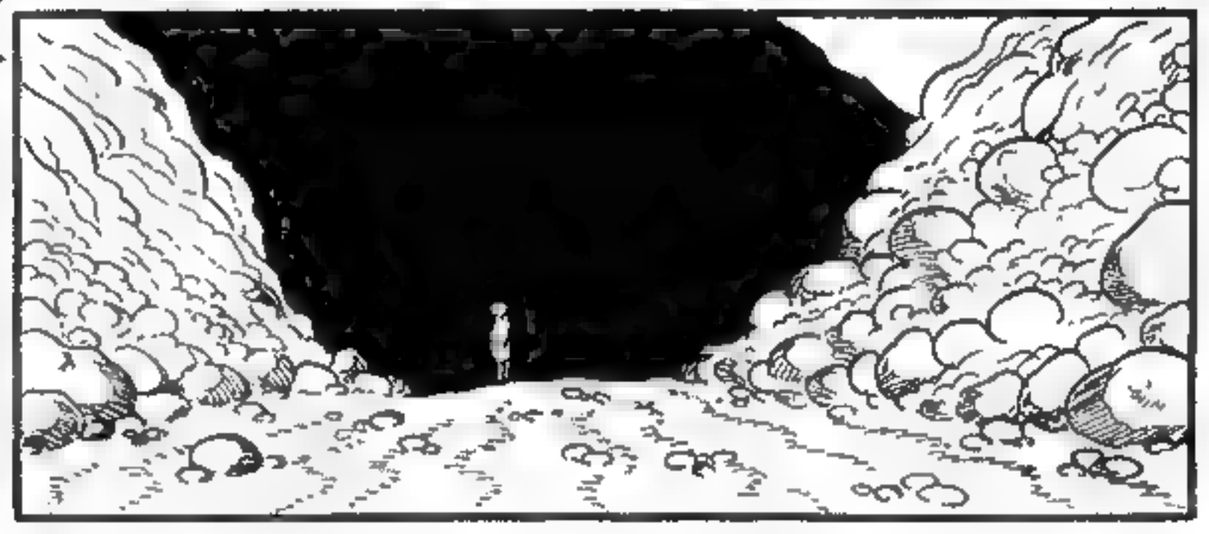


YOU WERE WITH THAT MERCHANT, RIGHT? I'LL LET YOU GO SO YOU CAN BURY THE GEEZER.



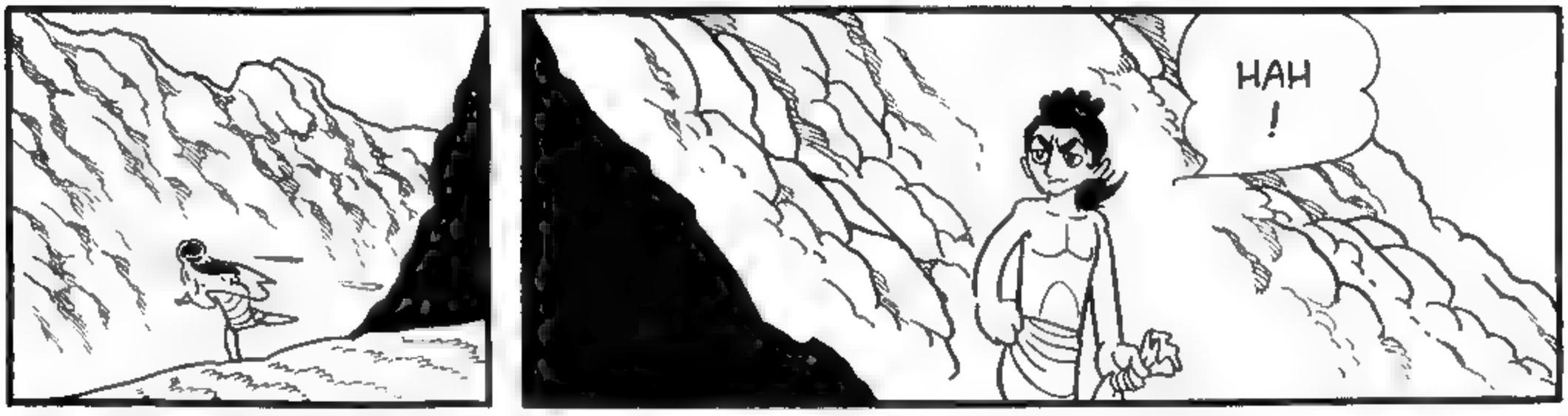


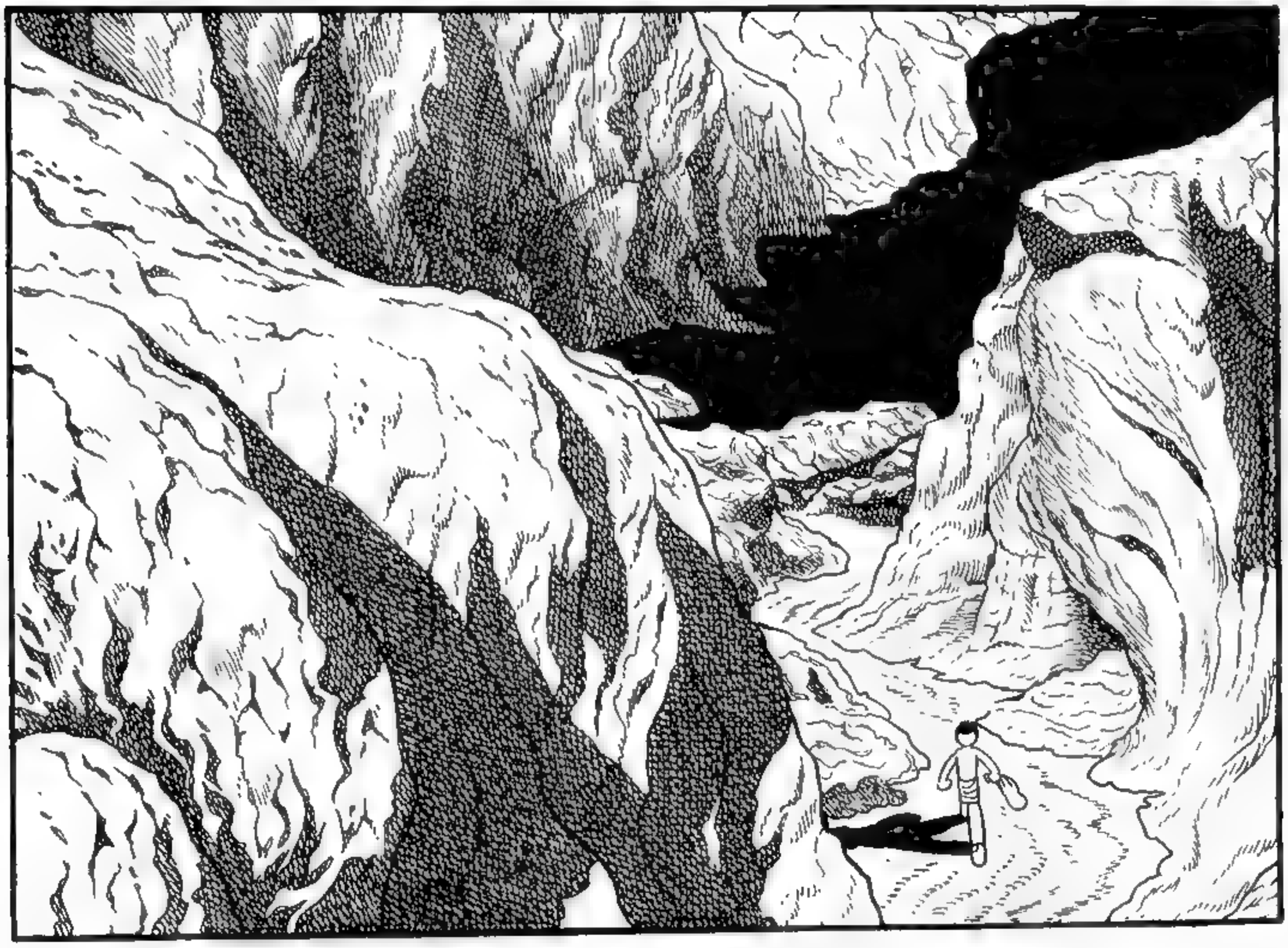
I CAN HIRE A FEW GUYS WITH THIS AND PULL OFF A BIGGER JOB.

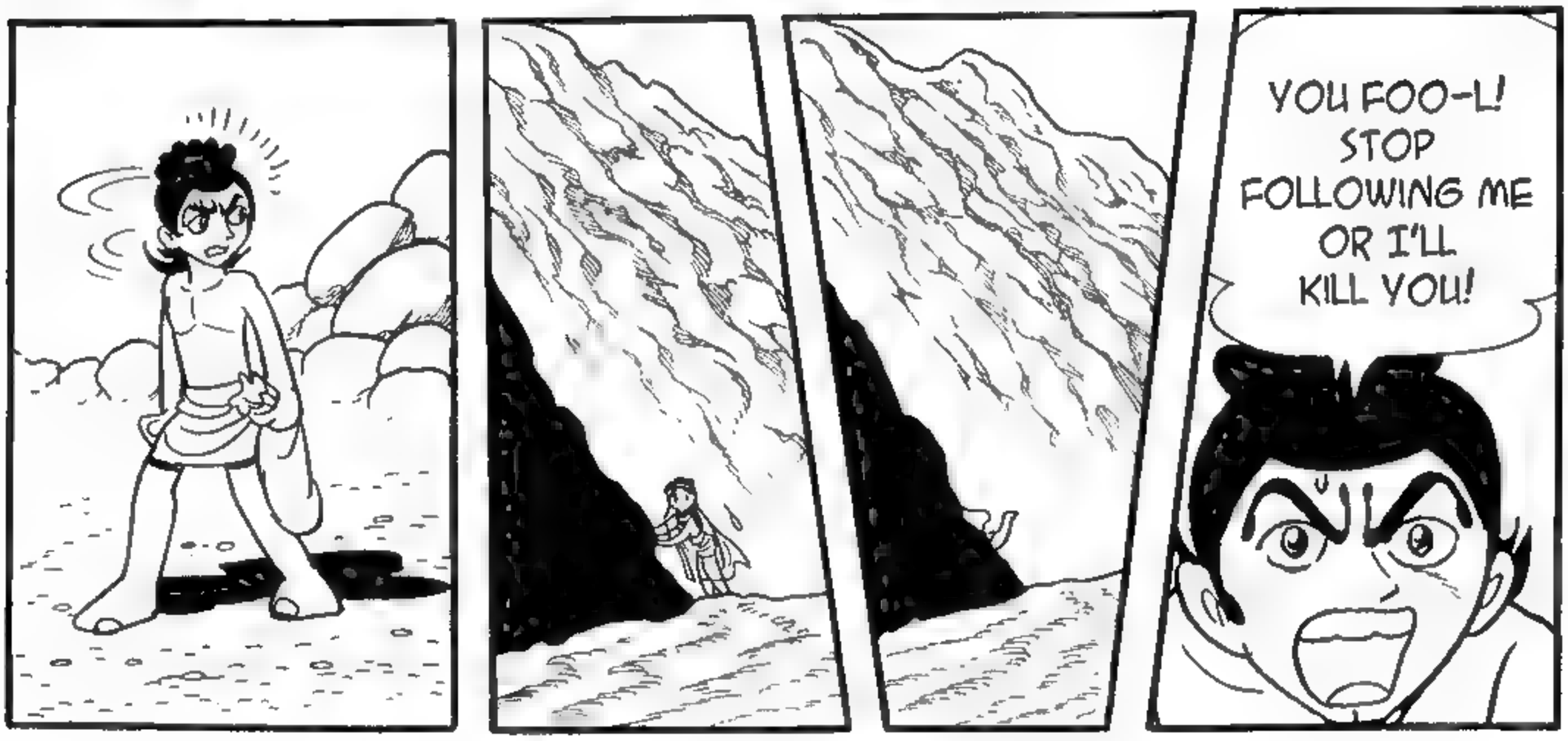


IT'S THAT GIRL!!
WHAT A FOOL. WHY'S SHE FOLLOWING ME?

GET LOST !!
YOU TRYING TO AVENGE YOUR OLE MAN BY SNEAKING UP ON ME?
SCRAM !!


HAH
!




YOU FOO-L!
STOP
FOLLOWING ME
OR I'LL
KILL YOU!

THERE SHE IS AGAIN!

I'M TOO BUSY TO BE FOOLING AROUND WITH WOMEN, OKAY?

ENOUGH! I'VE NO USE FOR A GIRL!

PANT

PANT

URRR...!

HMM... A CRUSHED MERCHANT, AND THE SCENT OF ANANDA.

WE'VE GOT A CASE.

THE BODY HASN'T DECOMPOSED MUCH. ANANDA MUST BE NEAR.

QUICK !!

ULP
i

ARRGGH

DAMN...

THAT DOES IT!!

WHAT DO YOU TAKE ME FOR?

HUFF HUFF

YOU WANNA KNOW WHAT I'D DO TO YOU?

SO YOU'RE A SLAVE ?

WHY DIDN'T YOU SAY SO?

THEN IT WAS YOUR MASTER THAT I KILLED...

UNLESS HE WAS A SLAVE MERCHANT.

...

YOU DON'T SAY A WORD! ARE YOU DUMB?

HMM. JUDGING FROM THAT NICE LITTLE LOIN-CLOTH, YOU WERE EITHER ESCORTING YOUR MASTER OR BEING BROUGHT TO MARKET TO BE SOLD OFF.

I SEE, YOU FOLLOWED ME BECAUSE YOU'VE NOWHERE TO GO, AND YOU CAN'T SURVIVE ALONE OUT HERE.

I'M A BANDIT. A WOMAN WOULD ATTRACT TOO MUCH ATTENTION.

I SYM-PATHIZE, BUT YOU GO YOUR OWN WAY.

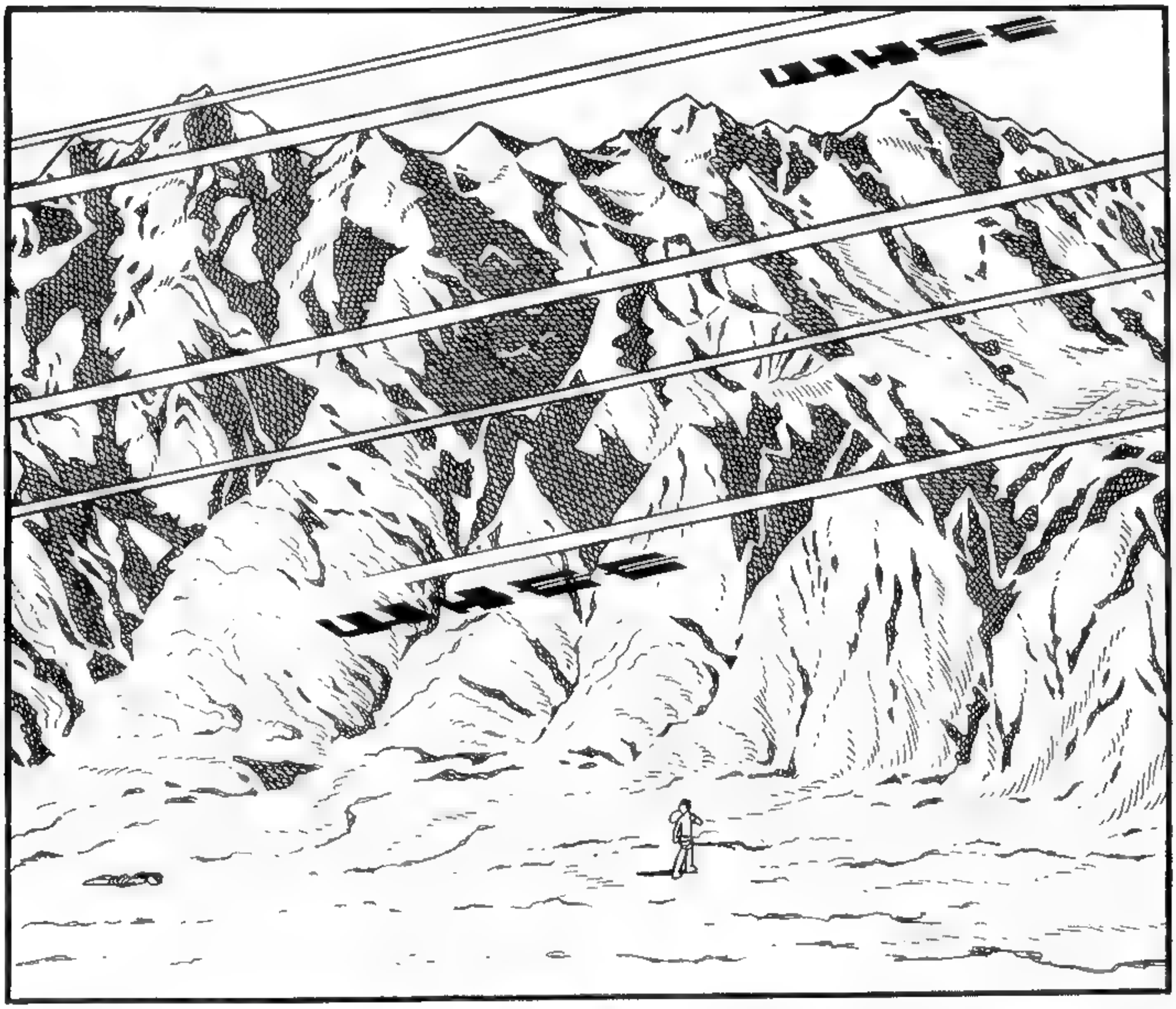
OTHERWISE, YOU'LL GET MIXED UP IN MY BUSINESS AND FOLKS WILL CATCH YOU AND BEAT YOU TO DEATH.

I SAID GET LOST!

THE LAST KIND OF BAGGAGE I NEED!

I COULD JUST KILL HER NOW MYSELF.

OR SHOULD I TRY'N' SELL HER OFF...?



SEE...
I KNEW YOU WOULDN'T LAST.

YOU'RE VULTURE FOOD NOW.
BYE

I CAN'T BELIEVE I'M DOING THIS!! TAKING PITY ON A GIRL AND GIVING HER A SHOULDER!!

THE WIND'S CARRYING ANANDA'S SCENT. HEH HEH

KLOP KLOP KLOP

OVER THERE. THIS TIME I'M GOING TO FINISH HIM OFF.

GRRR

GRRR

HOLD ON

DURING THAT LAST ATTACK YOU FELLAS CHICKENED OUT THE MOMENT HE GLARED AT YOU.

YOU SIT STILL.

WE CAN'T GET HIM HERE.

LET'S SIT TIGHT FOR NOW.

HEY

HANG ON, THERE'S A HOUSE.

HUF HUF HUF

YOU'RE A LUCKY GIRL. GETTING CARRIED THIS FAR, AND THE PLACE IS AN INN.

WHERE'S THE KEEPER?

THAT'S ME. WHAT DO YOU WANT, KID?

FOOD AND WATER AND A ROOM FOR THIS GIRL.

THIS IS AN INN, WE'VE GOT ALL THAT.

HAVE YOU GOT ANY MONEY, KID?

THOK

THUNK!

CALL ME "KID" AGAIN AND I'LL TEAR OUT YOUR STOMACH

HERE'S THE MONEY

LET HER STAY UNTIL SHE'S WELL.

I'LL KEEP HER, AS LONG AS I'M PAID. BUT THIS INN'S FOR CROOKS AND I CAN'T VOUCH FOR HER SAFETY.

HEY, ARE YOU AWAKE?

STAY HERE UNTIL YOU'RE FULLY RESTED. SO LONG!

A. A...

I TOLD YOU. YOU'RE A BURDEN TO ME.

A...! A...! A...!

HEE HEE HEH HEH HEH

I'LL BE YOUR NEW BEAU INSTEAD OF THAT BRAT.

A...! A...!! UH!!

DON'T TOUCH HER!!

BWONG

OWW

OWW

YOU BRAT! DAMMIT, YOU'RE MINCE MEAT!

URR...

A... UH

EVEN IF YOU COULD...

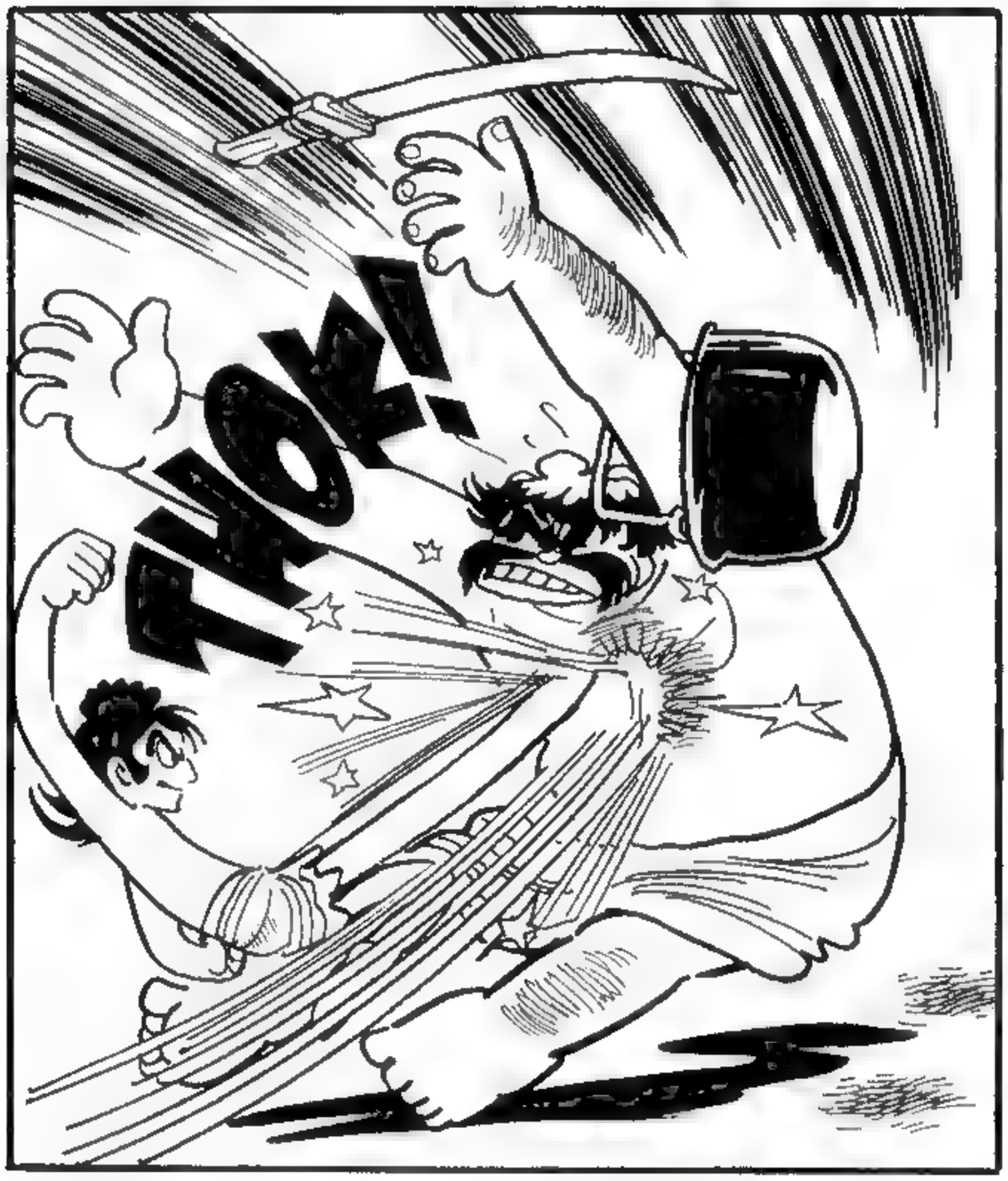
I'D LIVE. I'M BUILT TO, YE KNOW ?

C'MON, GIVE IT A TRY

YAHHH!

OOPS

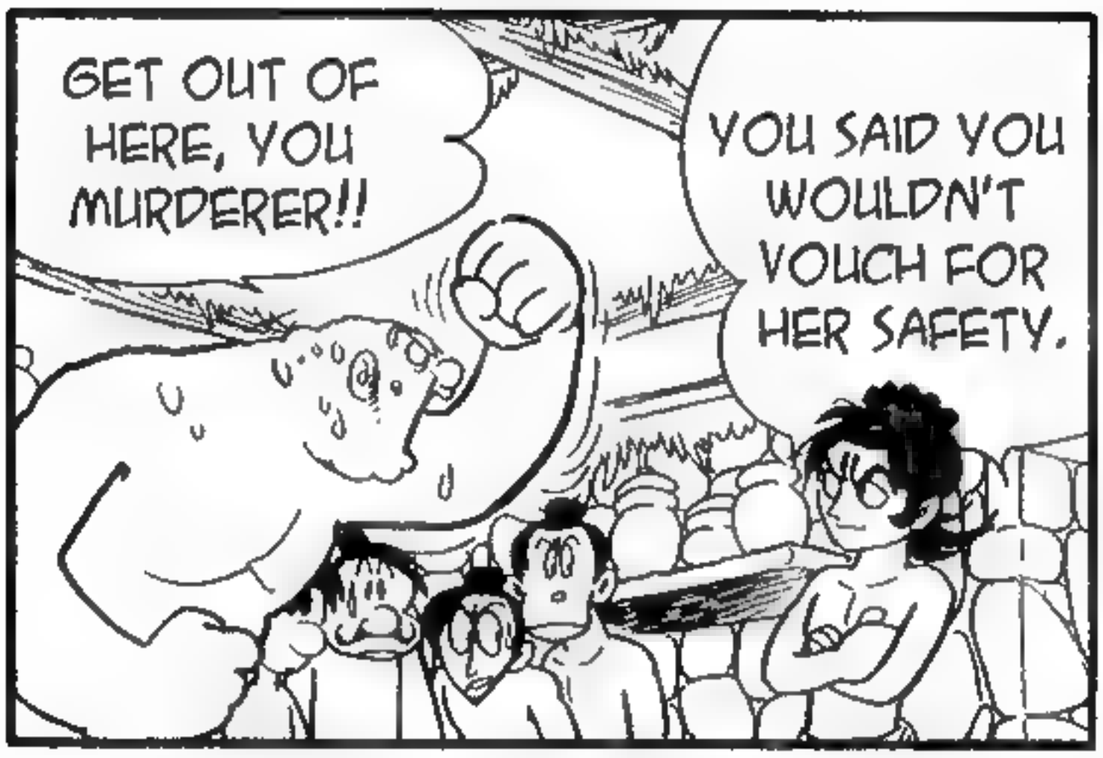
KLANG


THOK!

URRGH

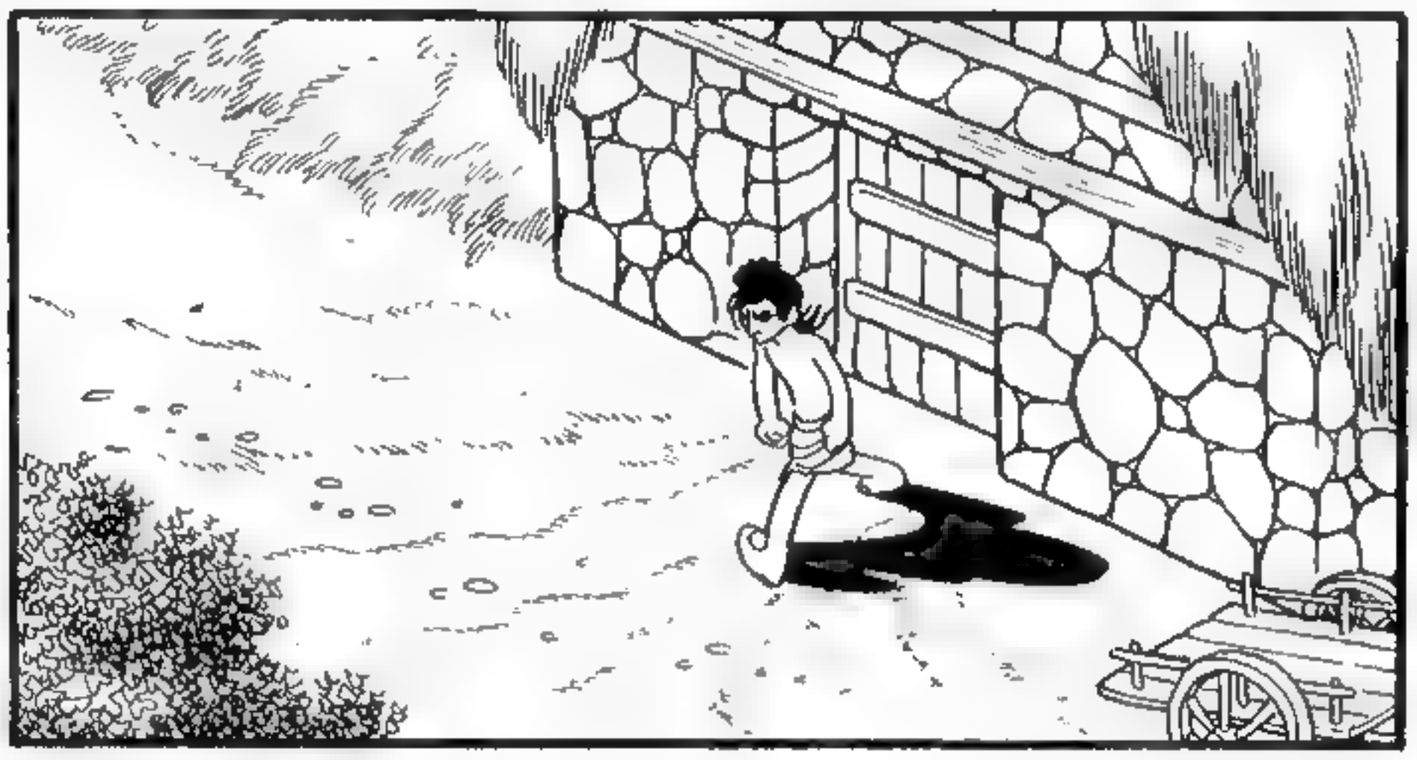
WHUD

YOU SEE, IT'S NOT SAFE ...
...BEING AROUND ME. UNDER-STOOD ?

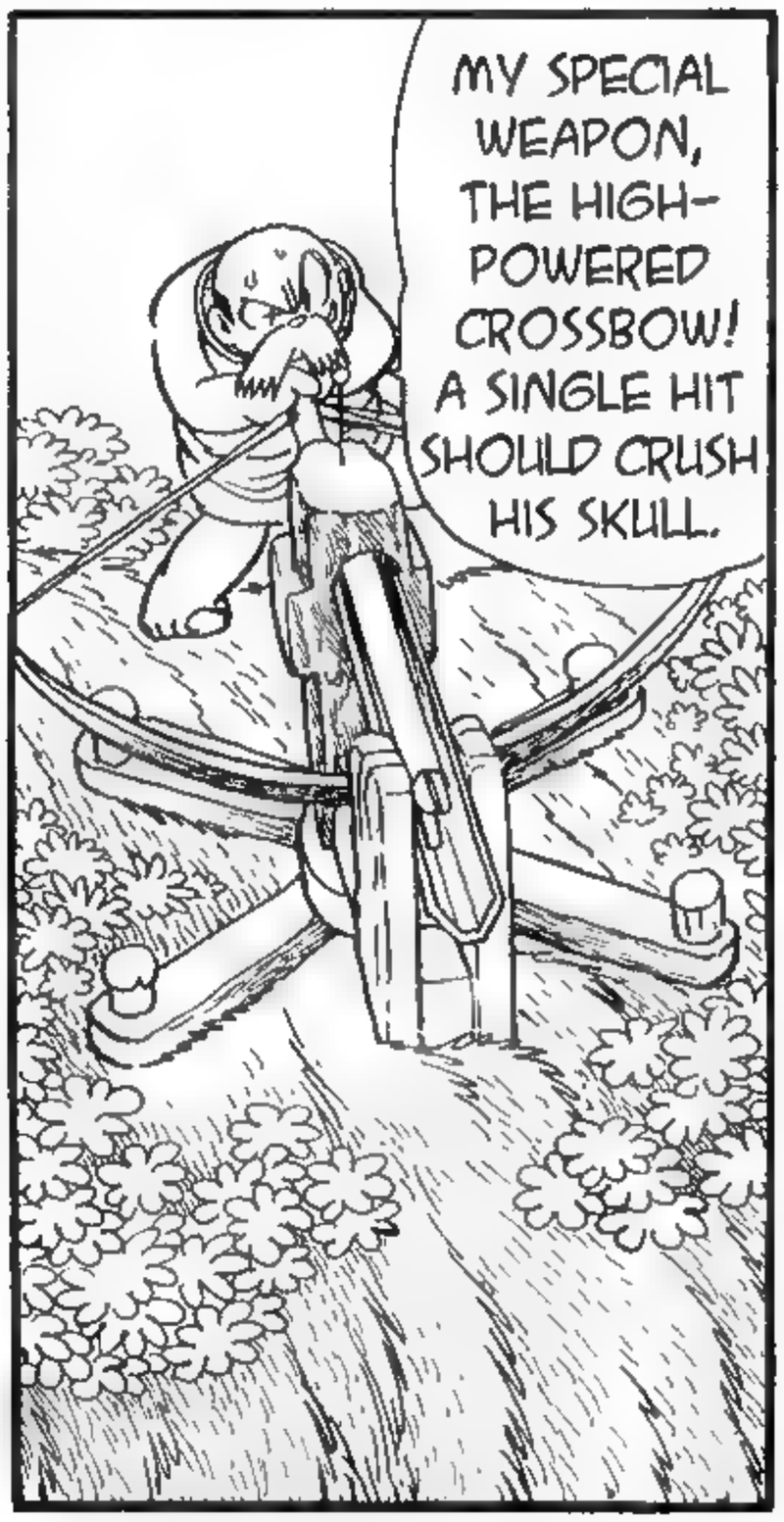

GET OUT OF HERE, YOU MURDERER!!
YOU SAID YOU WOULDN'T VOUCH FOR HER SAFETY.

NEXT TIME YOU LET ANYONE NEAR HER...
YOU DIE TOO.

SEND THE GIRL OFF TOMORROW



AH, HERE HE COMES. I'LL HAVE NO OTHER CHANCE LIKE THIS.


MY SPECIAL WEAPON, THE HIGH-POWERED CROSSBOW! A SINGLE HIT SHOULD CRUSH HIS SKULL.

LOAD THE STONE HERE,

DRAW TIGHT,

AND AIM !

I'M AN 8-TIME MARKSMANSHIP CHAMPION.

I DON'T CARE HOW TOUGH YOU ARE, ANANDA. WITH YOUR HEAD BLOWN TO BITS, YOU CAN'T POSSIBLY REVIVE!

DIE!

GAW

WHISH

POPP

ARRGH! IF IT WEREN'T FOR THE CROW...

ONE MORE!

THIS TIME...

POOP

AGAIN?!

I HAVE NO TIME FOR THIS. HE'LL ESCAPE.

HE LOOKS LOST IN THOUGHT... WHAT'S TROUBLING HIM?

THE FACE OF THE GIRL I LEFT AT THE INN LINGERS IN MY HEART. WHY?

SHE'S JUST A SLAVE GIRL...

AND I FEEL TORN!

WHAT IS SHE TO ME?

JUST A GIRL

I'M NOT IN LOVE WITH HER...

SO WHY DO I CARE?!

PHEW. I'M A FOOL.

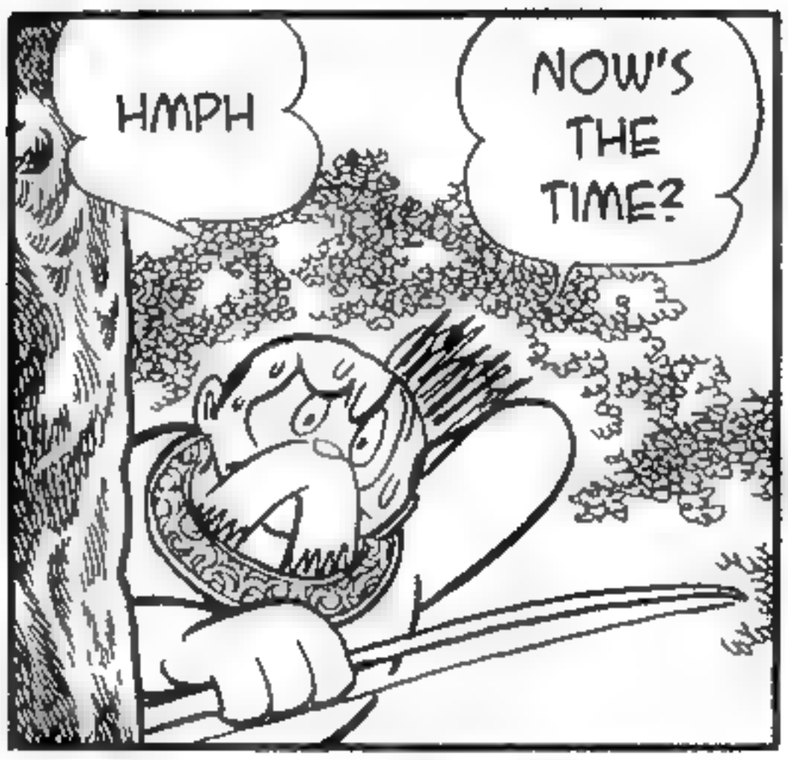
MAYBE I'LL GO BACK TO THE INN?

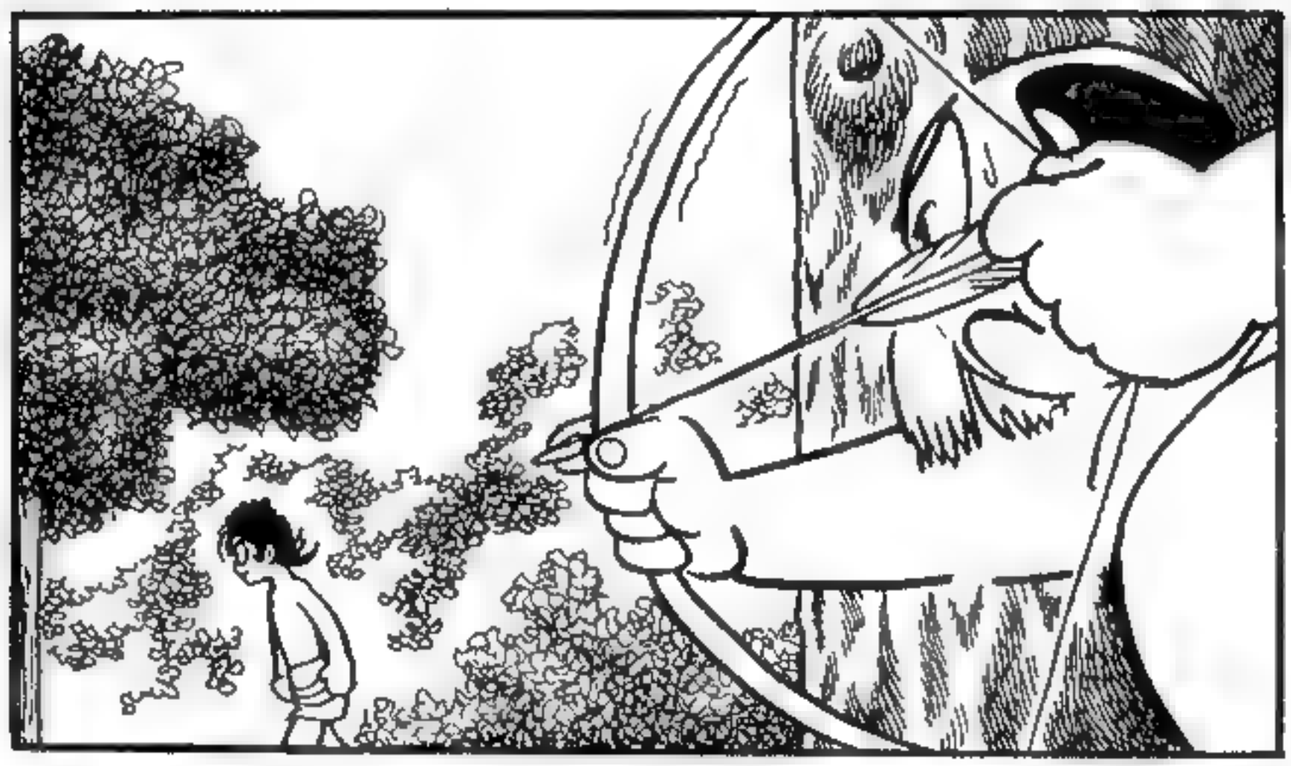
RIGHT NOW, I BET, THE INNKEEPER'S BABBLING ABOUT ME TO THE OFFICIALS.

TOO RISKY

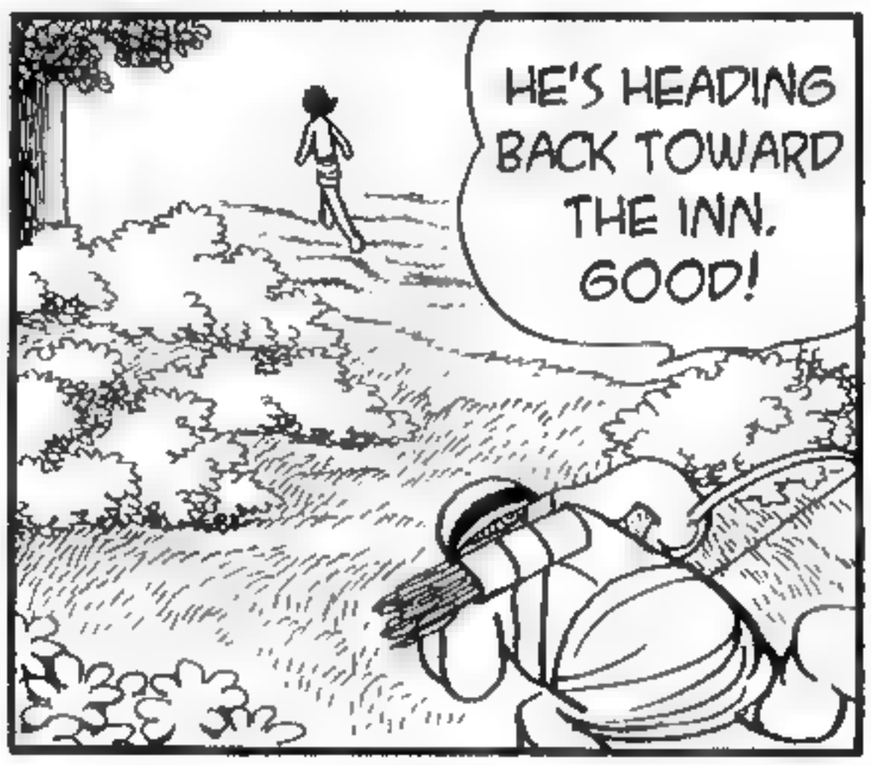
BUT IF SHE'S GETTING HARASSED AGAIN... THAT'S KINDA PAINFUL.

W-WAIT A SEC, HE'S HEADING BACK THIS WAY.

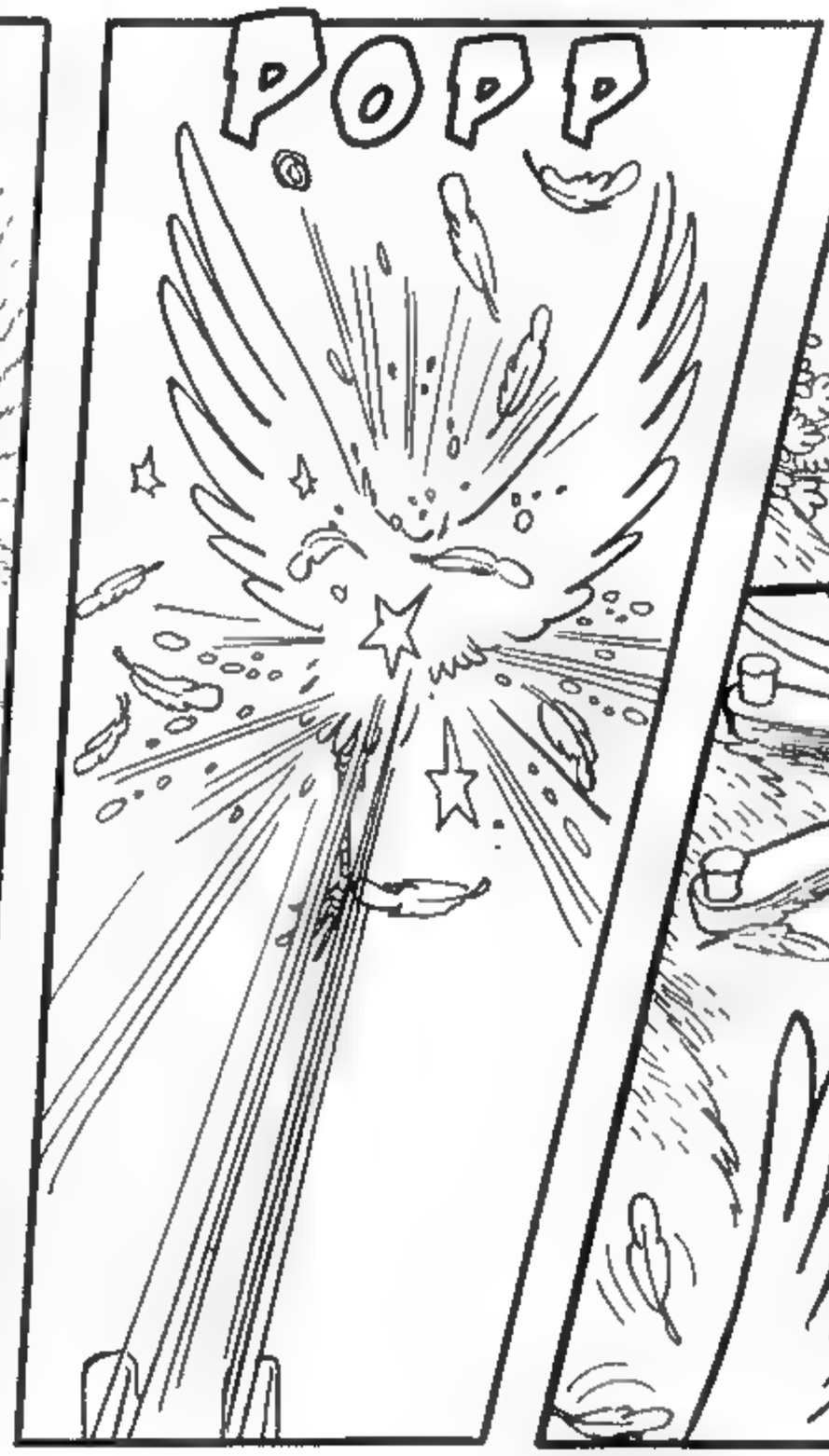

HMPH
NOW'S THE TIME?



ALMOST FORGOT
...THIS WON'T KILL HIM...


HE'S HEADING BACK TOWARD THE INN. GOOD!

YOU'RE A GONER

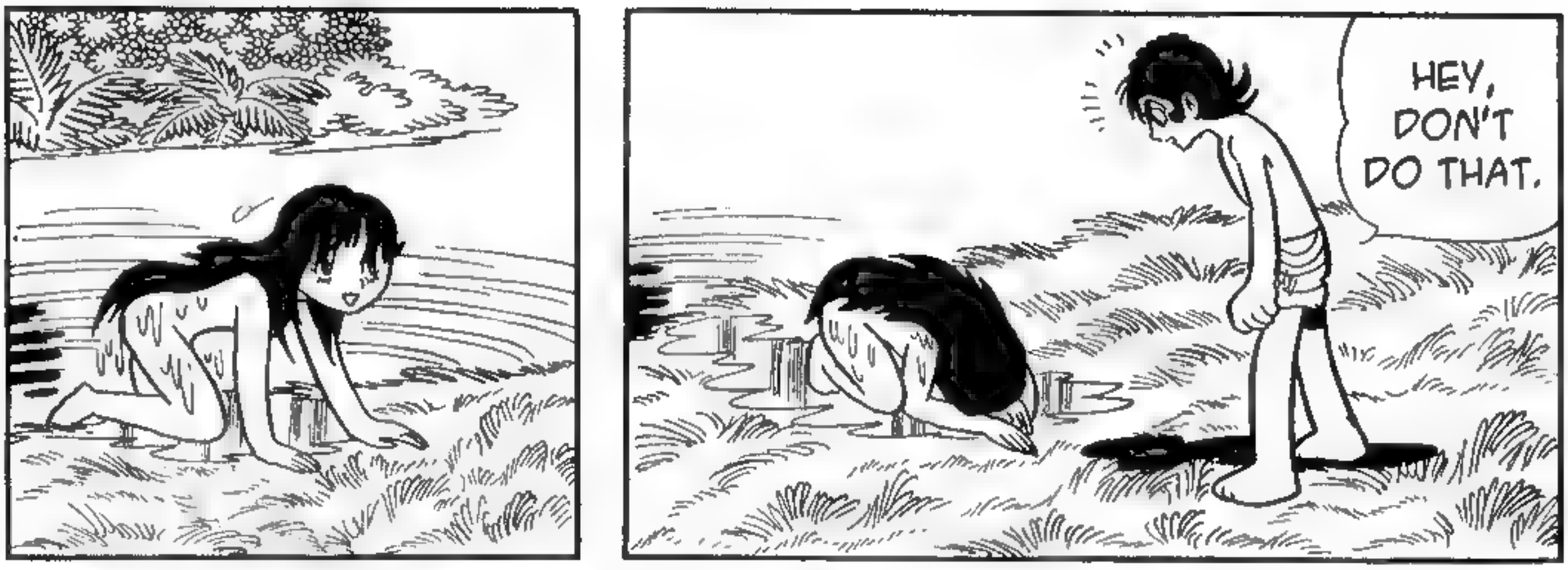

POPP

WHY'S THIS HAPPENING TO ME?

YOU! WHERE'S THE GIRL?
BATHING IN THE STREAM...

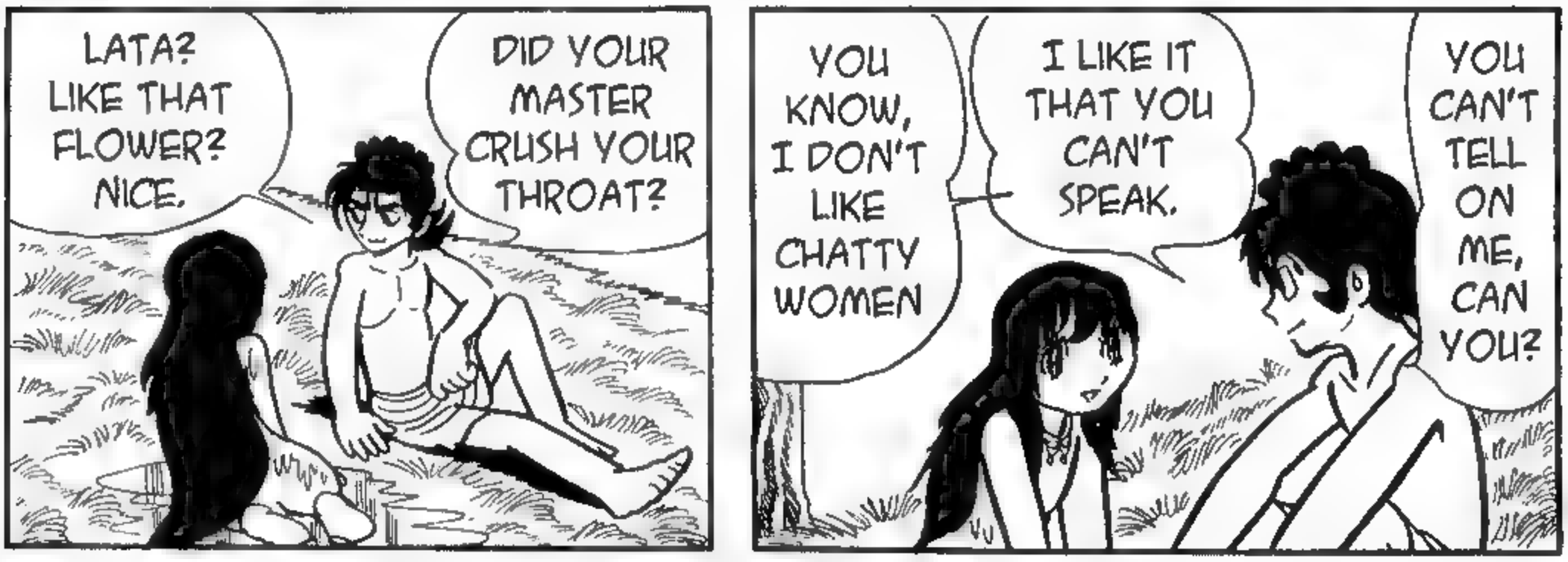
PHEW

FEELING BETTER ?


HEY, DON'T DO THAT.

I'M NOT SOMEBODY WHO DESERVES A BOW. I'M FAR FROM HOLY.
AND YOU'RE NOT A SLAVE ANYMORE. YOU'RE FREE TO DO AS YOU WISH.

SO, WHAT'S YOUR NAME?
A... UH...


LATA? LIKE THAT FLOWER? NICE.
DID YOUR MASTER CRUSH YOUR THROAT?
YOU KNOW, I DON'T LIKE CHATTY WOMEN
I LIKE IT THAT YOU CAN'T SPEAK.
YOU CAN'T TELL ON ME, CAN YOU?

AUHHH!

DID I UPSET YOU?

YOU MEAN, YOU WOULDN'T INFORM ON ME ANYWAY? BUT I'M A KILLER AND A BANDIT! YOU'VE SEEN ME DO IT.

THEY'LL PAY YOU WELL IF YOU TURN ME IN.

ENOUGH TO LIVE IN COMFORT ALL YOUR LIFE.

HEY, COME ON, I WAS JUST KIDDING.

...

GO OVER THOSE MOUN-TAINS...

OVER TO MAGADHA. YOU COULD FIND WORK THERE.

ME, I'M GOING WEST, TO SARNATH.

TAKE CARE

HERE HE COMES AGAIN... TH-TH-THIS TIME...

A!

A A

HOOO

FWOOSH

HUH ?

MISSED AGAIN !

IT WASN'T ME...

...HE'S A CHEAP COP WHO WANTS ME DEAD... GUESS HE WAS STILL AFTER ME.

HEH HEH

YOU SAVED MY LIFE.

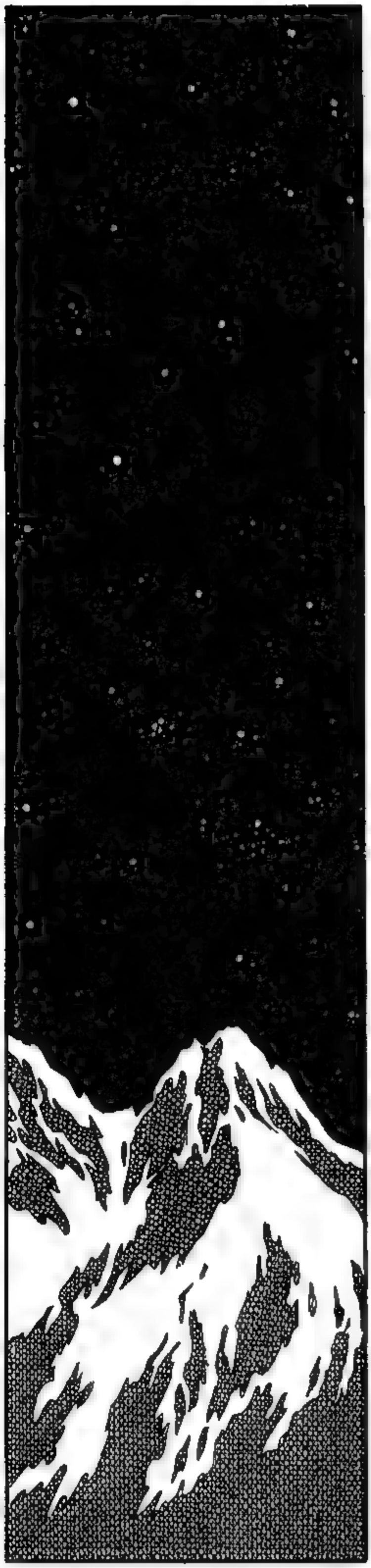
THANKS

...

WHAT'S WRONG ?

DON'T WANNA COME WITH ME?

NOW PUT ON SOME CLOTHES AND DO YOUR HAIR LIKE A GOOD WOMAN.
I'LL WAIT FOR YOU.
BUT I'M GETTING RID OF YOU AS SOON AS YOU GET ON MY NERVES.

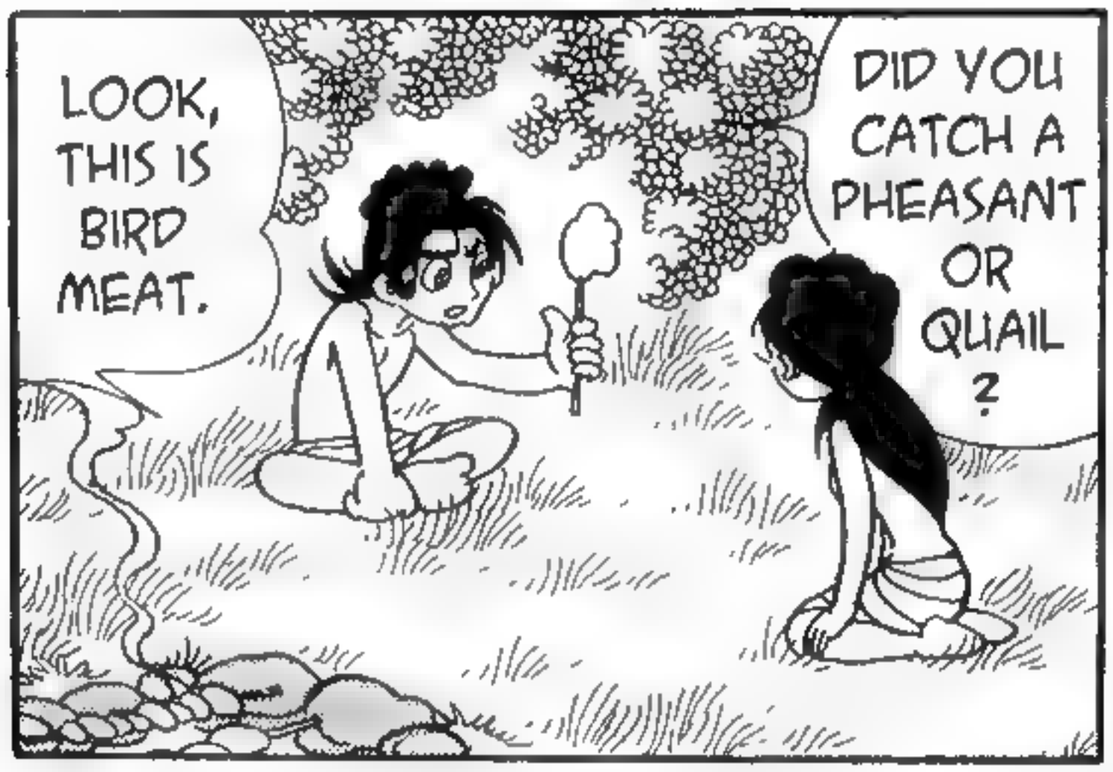


CHIRRUP
CHIRRUP

...
?

MMM... YOU'RE A GOOD COOK.

SAY, WHERE'D YOU GET THIS MEAT ?


LOOK, THIS IS BIRD MEAT.
DID YOU CATCH A PHEASANT OR QUAIL ?

BAHK BAHK BAHK
AH, SO IT'S CHICKEN. WHERE'D YOU FIND IT?

SHOOO
WHAT? YOU STOLE IT FROM...
A LOCAL FARM ?
YOU !
HOW COULD YOU?!

YOU FOOL! JUST BECAUSE I'M A THIEF DOESN'T MEAN YOU OUGHT TO
BECOME ONE TOO. IN THE FIRST PLACE...

AMATEUR BURGLARS ARE HOPELESS. THEY ALWAYS LEAVE SOME CLUE BEHIND...
I BET YOU DIDN'T RUB OUT YOUR FOOTPRINTS.

SEE... THEY TRACED YOU BACK HERE.

TUNE

TONK!

THOK

WONK

KERBOX

KARTAK

KLAK

URRGH

OWWW

HEY... SIT UP.

NOTHING BROKEN ?

YOU ALL RIGHT ?

YOU DON'T HAVE TO APOLOGIZE.

I WASN'T TOO ALERT EITHER.

I HOPE YOU'VE LEARNED NOT TO TRY TO IMITATE ME.

OTHERWISE THEY'LL PUT A NOOSE ROUND THAT PRETTY NECK OF YOURS.

LET'S FIND A STREAM

AND COOL OUR BRUISES

THERE'S ONE OVER THERE

MAN, IT HURTS...

COME ON

IT'S NICE AND COOL

HUH ?

AT THE INN YOU WERE FEARLESS.

YET YOU LET MERE FARMERS POUNCE ON YOU AS THEY LIKED.

WHO'RE YOU ?

IF YOU'D DECIDED TO PUT UP SOME RESISTANCE ...

...YOU'D HAVE ENDED UP KILLING A FEW OF THEM, EASILY. THEN OFFICIALS WOULD HAVE SHOWN UP AND KNOWN YOU FOR WHO YOU ARE.

SO YOU HELD YOURSELF BACK ON PURPOSE...

YOU'RE THE INFAMOUS BANDIT ANANDA, AREN'T YOU?

SO I AM !

WHAT D'YOU WANT ?

I'M A DRIFTER, AHIMSA BY NAME.

I'M ABOUT TO PULL A BIG JOB.

I'D LIKE YOUR HELP.

HAH!! I DO MY OWN JOBS. I DON'T WORK FOR ANYONE ELSE.

NOT EVEN TO LIFT THIRTY SACKS OF GOLD?

THIRTY SACKS OF GOLD?!

ARE YOU SERIOUS? YOU BETTER NOT BE SWINDLING ME, FOR YOUR OWN SAKE.

HA HA HA OF COURSE IT'S TRUE. THAT'S WHY I NEED YOUR HELP.

THIRTY SACKS OF GOLD! THAT'S A FORTUNE.

I WANT SOME PROOF !

I KNOW OF A FAMOUS BRAHMIN WHO LIVES IN THIS COUNTRY.

HE'S SO GREEDY HE'S BEEN BLEEDING THE ROYAL FAMILY DRY. A PORTION OF THE TREASURE HE'S HOARDED IS BEING HAULED OUT, TOMORROW!

THEN HEAR ME OUT ...

WAIT HERE. I'LL BE BACK BY EARLY AFTERNOON. I JUST NEED TO MAKE SURE HE'S TELLING THE TRUTH.

A...AH UH...

DON'T TRUST YOU YET... YOU LEAD.

KLOP KLOP KLOP KLOP

KLOP KLOP KLOP KLOP KLOP KLOP

TUNK

ARRRR

A...!!
AUH!

ARRRR

ARRRR

WHUD WHUD WHUD

OVER THERE

SO THAT'S THE MONK'S MANSION. AIN'T IT GORGEOUS ...

THE BRAHMIN'S GOT A LOT OF POWER. HE'S SIPHONED OFF THE ROYAL FAMILY'S TREASURE, AND THAT'S WHERE HE HOARDS IT.

WHY NOT PULL THIS OFF SOLO ?

TAKE A GOOD LOOK

I COULD DEAL WITH A TIGER. BUT THREE? I CAN'T GO INTO THIS ALL BY MY LONESOME.

THEY SAY YOU CAN PETRIFY POLICE DOGS, USING SORCERY.

SO I'M LEAVING THOSE TIGERS TO YOU.

INSTEAD OF GUARD DOGS, THEY KEEP THESE FEROCIOUS TIGERS, THREE OF THEM!

HAH. I SEE. SO I GET TO DEAL WITH THE TIGERS WHILE YOU RAKE IT IN.

DON'T BE STUPID. HOW COULD I CARRY THIRTY SACKS OF GOLD? YOU'LL JOIN ME ONCE YOU'VE TAKEN CARE OF THE TIGERS.

SO WE'RE SPLIT- TING IT?

OF COURSE. I'LL STAY HERE TO KEEP AN EYE ON THEM.

THEY'RE HAULING OUT THE GOLD TOMORROW. COME BACK HERE TOMORROW MORNING... WE STRIKE THEN.

HMMM... I JUST DON'T TRUST THAT BASTARD.

BUT I BET THOSE THIRTY SACKS OF GOLD REALLY EXIST.

FIFTEEN SACKS FOR ME... NOT BAD...

I'VE NEVER PULLED OFF SUCH A BIG JOB...

I COULD LIVE OFF OF THAT FOR A WHILE.

MAYBE I'LL BUY AN ESTATE WITH A HOUSE...

SHACK UP WITH A WOMAN

WITH LATA...

NO!

WHAT FOOLISH THOUGHTS ...! SHAME ON ME.

WHERE COULD SHE BE HIDING ?

LATA

HEY, LATA!

DAMN. I HOPE SHE DIDN'T GO STEAL ANOTHER CHICKEN.

DOGS!

OH NO

LAAATAA!

HEH HEH HEH HEH

DO YOU KNOW WHO I AM? PAMPAS, A SCRAPPY COP.

HEH HEH, I'VE BEEN TRACKING ANANDA, RATHER STUBBORNLY, I MUST SAY.

YOU SEE, I SWORE TO MY COLLEAGUES I'D KILL ANANDA IN A WEEK.

AND YOU KNOW WHAT? TODAY'S MY LAST DAY.

BUT TODAY, I'M GONNA KILL HIM. YOU'RE MY BAIT, HMM?

THE ROPE CHAFES? ARE YOU IN PAIN? BEAR IT FOR ME, WILL YOU?

SO... ANANDA SEES THAT YOU'RE GONE,

I KNOW, I KNOW. HE'S IN LOVE WITH YOU, RIGHT? AND YOU'RE IN LOVE WITH HIM? HO HO

HE SEARCHES FRANTICALLY FOR YOU, HE FINDS YOU HERE, BUT YOU, MY DEAR, YOU CAN'T SPEAK...

AND SO HE CARELESSLY RUSHES TOWARDS YOU...

AND THEN, AND THEN?!

SINK

GLUGG GLUGG GLUGG

HE STEPS INTO THE QUICKSAND HIDDEN UNDER THE BED OF DRY GRASS.

AUH!! UH...

AND THUS DID ANANDA DISAPPEAR FROM THE FACE OF THE EARTH— BEFORE THE TIME LIMIT. ...BYE NOW!

LATA!!

WHERE ARE YOU, ANSWER ME!

BUT SHE CAN'T SPEAK...

HEYYY!

A...!
A...!

UH...
UH...

THIS IS AWFUL!!

THAT COP!!

COMING TO THE RESCUE!

AAH! AHH!!

WAIT, OKAY? YOU'LL BE DOWN IN A SEC.

SPLASH!

A...AU

A TRAP...

UH-OH... THIS IS QUICKSAND...

BINGO!!

PAMPAS!! YOU... SCUM!!

HA HA HA HA HA YOU THINK A MURDEROUS BANDIT LIKE YOU HAS THE RIGHT TO JUDGE ME? WIN OR LOSE. THAT'S ALL THERE IS.

HOW DARE YOU USE AN INNOCENT GIRL...

LOOK WHAT YOU DID TO HER !

SINCE YOU SEEM LIKE THE FORTUNE CHILD OF SOME DEVIL, I WASN'T GOING TO BE PICKY ABOUT MY MEANS.

SINCE YOU'RE SO... IMMOR-TAL.

THAT SAID,

ONCE YOU'RE SUBMERGED FOR AN HOUR I'LL LET HER GO, DON'T WORRY.

SHIT...

I... WON'T DIE...

I JUST DON'T DIE. YOU'LL SEE...

REALLY? AT THE BOTTOM OF THAT MUD POOL IS A SWARM OF CRAWFISH-LIKE THINGS THAT GOBBLE ANIMALS THAT FALL INTO THE POOL. THEY LEAVE NOTHING.

...

YOU'LL BE TUCKED AWAY IN COUNTLESS INSECT STOMACHS.

SO I SIT BY YOUR DEATHBED.

LATA!!

LATA... I... I LOVE YOU!!

A...AU

GGCFG

GGCFG

GLG

AUH !!

GLUGGLUGGLUGG

ANANDA. YOU SEEK MY HELP, ONCE AGAIN ?

IS THAT YOU...?!

MHA HA HA... IT'S ONLY THANKS TO ME THAT YOU SURVIVE WHATEVER HAPPENS TO YOU.

AH, DEVIL! THIS TIME I REALLY SCREWED UP. HELP ME!

HMM, HOW SELF-SERVING. BUT I'LL GRANT YOUR PLEA

SINCE A VITAL TASK AWAITS YOU.

YOU'LL RESCUE ME FROM THIS MUD PIT?

ONLY IF YOU LEAVE THAT GIRL.

I SEE YOU'RE READY TO LOVE HER.

IF YOU DON'T CAST HER ASIDE,

YOU'LL BE THE ONE TO SUFFER FOR IT...

GLOG GLOG GLOG

FOR I WON'T BE PROTECTING YOU THEN!

SPLOOSH!!

AIEEE

HISSSSSSSS

...

UH... A...!!

I'M COMING, LATA!!

DON'T BE AFRAID, IT'S ME.

GOOD... WE'RE OKAY NOW.

I'M SIMPLY IMMORTAL,

LATA!

I'LL EXPLAIN IT ALL ONE DAY. POINT IS, I'M ALIVE...

AND I'VE GOT SOME-THING TO TELL YOU.

AFTER THIS NEXT JOB I'LL HAVE MONEY.

I WANT TO BUILD A HOUSE FOR US. WHAT DO YOU THINK?

WE'LL GET MARRIED !!

CHAPTER FOUR

ANGULIMALA

KLOP KLOP KLOP

HA HA... I KNEW YOU'D COME.

WHAT'S GOING ON?

THEY HAVEN'T HAULED OUT THE GOLD SACKS YET.
WE'LL WAIT ANOTHER HALF AN HOUR.
OKAY WITH THE PLAN?

AT DAWN, HORSES LOADED WITH THIRTY SACKS OF GOLD WILL COME OUT OF THAT GATE WITH TIGERS.
YOU TAKE CARE OF THE TIGERS. THE SEVERAL GUARDS THEY'LL HAVE WON'T BE A PROBLEM FOR ME.

JUST DON'T RUN OFF WITH THE MONEY. THE DEAL IS WE SPLIT IT.

SURE THING

HERE THEY COME.

CHARGE!

DEEP DEEP DEEP

HEY

READY FOR THE TIGERS, ANANDA?

ARGH!

SLISSH

BANDITS! UNLEASH THE TIGERS!

NEIGH!

LINGH... FLEE IN FEAR FROM MY PSYCHIC POWER!

HARRRR

W-WAIT...

ANANDA?! WHAT'S GOING ON?

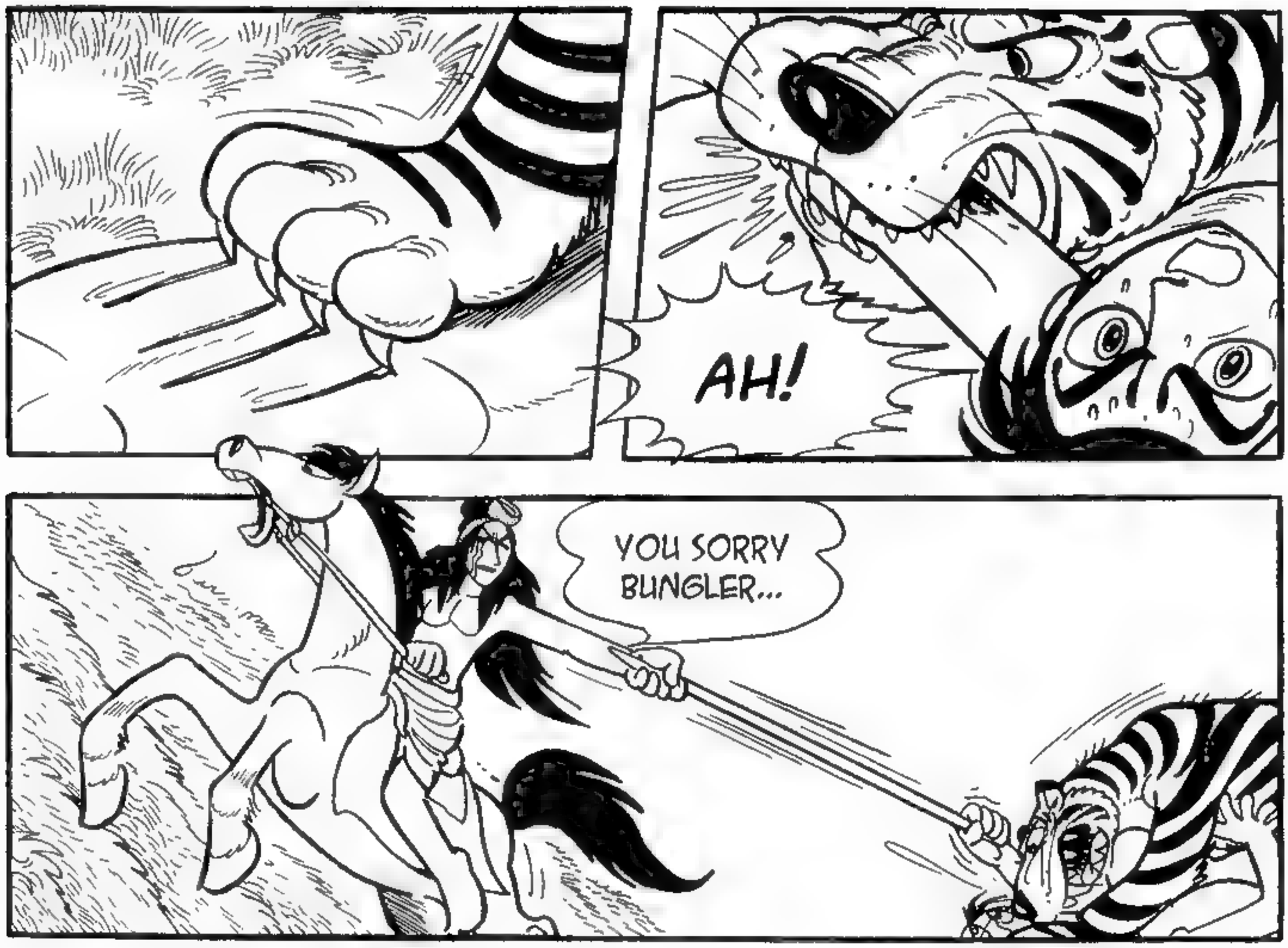
MY GLARE ISN'T...

WORKING!

STUPID BRUTE!

HUP

HURRY AND KILL THE TIGERS, OR THIS WON'T BE FUN!


AH!
YOU SORRY BUNGLER...
UP!
WE HAVE TO RETREAT.
KKKKKK
OOOOOO
PPPPPP

KLOP KLOP KLOP KLOP

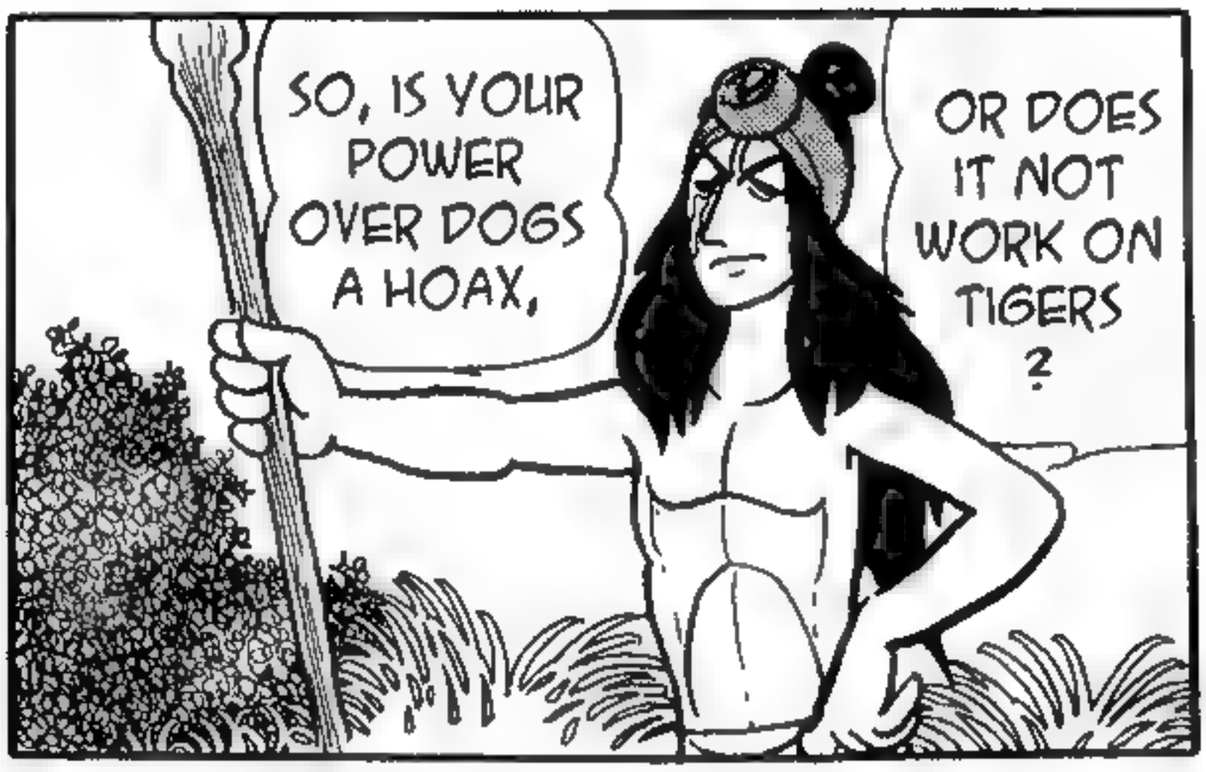
ULP

OH... OH...

MGH

A RARE SCREW-UP FOR THE INFAMOUS ANANDA, EH?

OWW ACH!


SO, IS YOUR POWER OVER DOGS A HOAX,
OR DOES IT NOT WORK ON TIGERS ?

...

WELL, SO MUCH FOR THE SACKS OF GOLD.
PRETTY PATHETIC, THOUGH, WOULDN'T YOU SAY?

A... UH

HOW DID YOU COME BY YOUR SORCERY ANYWAY ?

AH, I KNOW. SOME DEVIL GAVE YOU THE POWER. I BUY THAT.

QUESTION IS... HOW'D YOU LOSE IT?

MAYBE YOUR POWER'S BEEN SEALED ...

...

LOST YOUR TONGUE TOO? ARE YOU TOO ASHAMED TO SPEAK?

OR MAYBE THAT GIRL'S DRAINED YOUR GUTS.

KRAK

SAY IT AGAIN

AND I'LL BASH IN ALL YOUR TEETH.

YOU DON'T KNOW WHEN TO STOP, DO YOU.

OH? YOU WANNA FIGHT ME WITH ONE ARM?

THAT'S ALL I NEED FOR YOU.

REALLY WANT TO FIGHT?
FINE WITH ME. I'LL USE ONLY ONE ARM TOO.

COME ON!

POW

ECK
THOK

KAPOW

KRAK
KRAKK

WUMR

KRR

KRR

NGH

THOK

WAK!

KOHTHOKTHOKTHOK

POW

HUF

HUF

HUF

HUFF
HUFF

PUF

HUF

HOOF

TOOL
TOOL

YOU'RE NO ORDINARY DRIFTER. YOU'RE TOO GOOD, YOU'VE BEEN TRAINED TO FIGHT.

MY NAME'S AHIMSA...

THAT, YOU TOLD ME... SO WHAT'S YOUR STORY?

I'M JUST A DRIFTER. MY ORIGINS ARE OF NO INTEREST TO YOU.

AHIMSA, YOU STUCK TO YOUR PROMISE AND DIDN'T ONCE USE YOUR OTHER ARM. YOU DIDN'T TRY ANY DIRTY TRICKS EITHER. THAT'S NOT HOW A RUFFIAN FIGHTS.

WERE YOU A WARRIOR ONCE, IN SOME KING-DOM?

WHY SHOULD YOU CARE?

I DON'T. I JUST... WANT TO KNOW.

WELL, YOU GUESSED RIGHT. AS A YOUTH I WAS THE SON OF A NOBLE.

I HAD THIS OLD BRAHMIN AS A TUTOR...

AND THE BRAHMIN HAD A WIFE WHO WAS YOUNG AND PRETTY.

ONE DAY, TO MY SURPRISE, SHE TRIED TO SEDUCE ME.

I LOVE YOU DEARLY. PLEASE, RUN AWAY WITH ME!

BUT YOU'RE MY TEACHER'S WIFE.

MA'AM, DON'T BE SILLY.

I'M SO BORED WITH THAT GEEZER. COME ON, SAY YOU LOVE ME.

PLEASE DON'T EVER ENTER MY ROOM AGAIN!

X

OH, HO-NEY...! THAT BOY INSULTED ME... HE CALLED ME A PIG LADY!

HE ALSO CALLED YOU THE PIG MONK...

PIG

URRGH... I'LL TEACH THE SPOILED BRAT A LESSON.

MASTER, I COME AGAIN TO SEEK YOUR WISDOM.

HAH

I'LL TEACH YOU SOME HYPNOSIS. STARE AT MY HANDS. NOW SLEEP... SLEEP...

YOU SHALL ROAM THE CITY FROM TONIGHT ON, AND GO ON A KILLING SPREE. COLLECT A HUNDRED LITTLE FINGERS: THAT IS YOUR ASSIGNMENT.

HYPNOTIZED, I WANDERED EVERY NIGHT UNAWARES...

KILLING INNOCENTS, CHOPPING OFF THEIR LITTLE FINGERS!

ANGULIMALA (NECKLACE OF FINGERS) PEOPLE CALLED ME, AND FEARED ME LIKE A DEMON.

IT WAS AFTER I CUT OFF THE NINETY-NINTH FINGER THAT THE THING HAPPENED.

I SPOTTED A WOMAN PASSERBY AND MOVED IN FOR MY LAST KILL.

WHY! IT WAS MY MOTHER

RIGHT AWAY, I CAME TO MY SENSES. I REALIZED I'D BEEN DOING THIS TERRIBLE THING AND FLED IN A DAZE.

AFTER THAT I BECAME A DRIFTER, TRAVELING WITHOUT AIM, BUT I DESPISE BRAHMIN FOR MY FATE.

SINCE THEN I'VE ONLY STOLEN FROM MONKS.

EVERY MONK IN THE WORLD IS MY ENEMY.

MY GREATEST DREAM IS TO BUT-CHER

THE GREATEST MONK IN THE WORLD.

SO THAT'S MY STORY

HM

AND NOW IT'S YOUR TURN.

I'D LIKE TO KNOW HOW YOU ACQUIRED YOUR POWERS.

YOU'D THINK I WAS LYING.

IT'S ALL RIGHT. NO NEED TO BE SHY WITH ME.

THEY SAY I'M THE SON OF A DEVIL

DEVILS ARE MONKS' RIVALS

A DEVIL GAVE ME MY POWER ...

TO SEND A MONK TO HELL.

I'M TO MEET THAT MONK SOME DAY.

I THINK I LIKE YOUR STORY. WHO IS THIS MONK?

BUDDHA

BUDDHA'S SUPPOSED TO BE THE GREATEST MONK IN THE WORLD.

I SEE. MAYBE THE MONK YOU SPEAK OF...

IS MY TRUE HUNDREDTH VICTIM.

I THINK I KNOW WHY YOU LOST YOUR POWER.

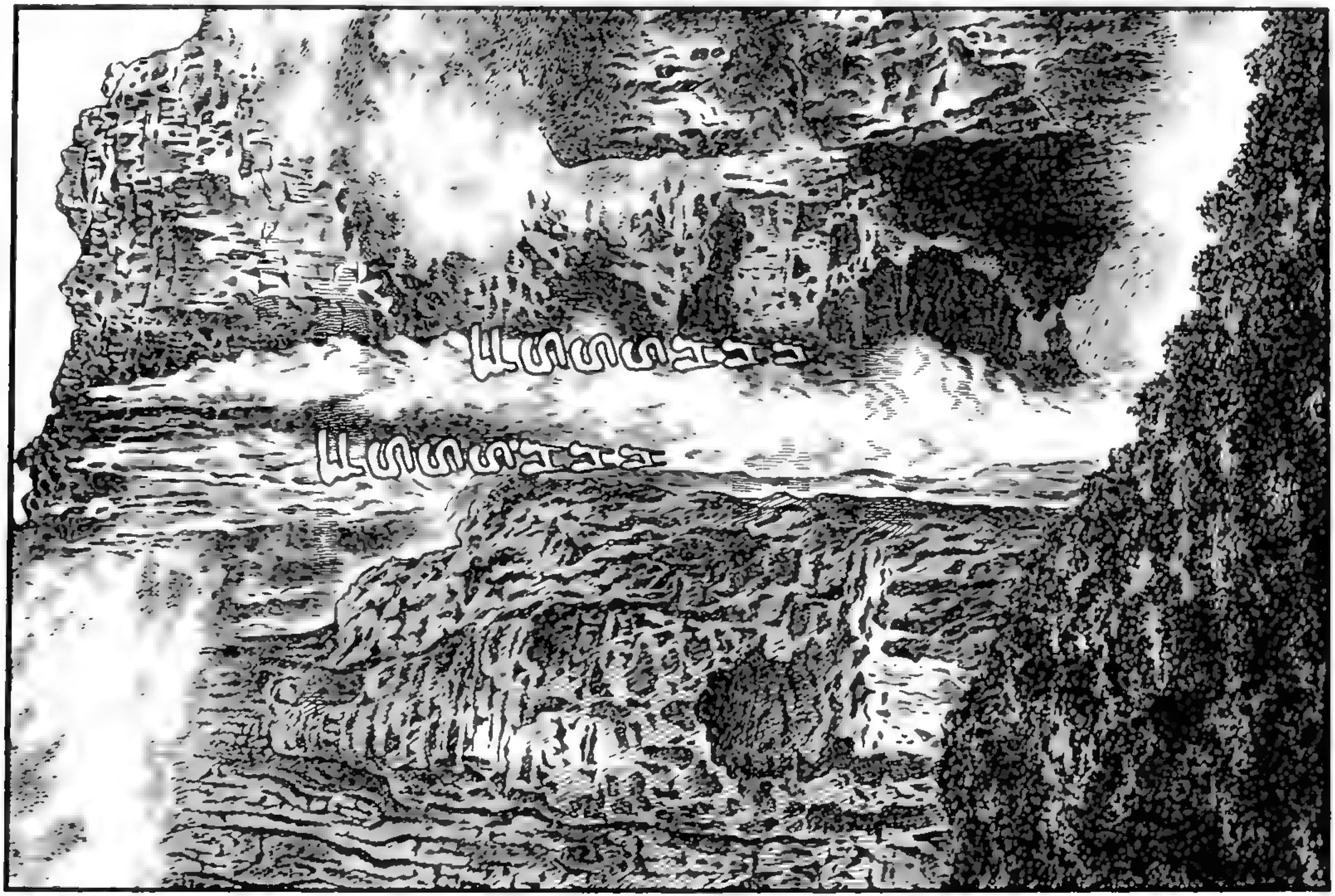
IT'S NOT HARD TO SEE...

YOU'RE IN LOVE WITH THAT GIRL.

ENOUGH WITH THAT! IT'S NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS!

YOU'RE FINISHED IF YOU DON'T GET RID OF HER.

NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS I SAID!!



HA HA HA! LOOK AT ALL THESE HOOF PRINTS. WE'LL CATCH UP WITH THE GOLD CARRIERS IN NO TIME.

UH

LEAVE ME ALONE!!

WHUP!

A-
A-
!!

FWOF
FWOF

HMMM... A TERRIBLE INFECTION.
HE MAY DIE IF HE ISN'T TREATED.

I LOOKED LIKE BLACK JACK? YOU MUST HAVE A BAD FEVER.

YOU'LL RUB HERBS ON IT?
THAT WON'T CURE HIM.

THIS IS THE DEVIL'S WORK. HE'S BEING PUNISHED WITH THIS WOUND.

THE WOMAN SPELLS TROUBLE FOR YOU.

IF YOU WANT TO BE CURED, DITCH HER.

ENOUGH!

BUT THAT'S THE ONLY WAY YOU'LL APPEASE THE DEVIL. FORGET ABOUT LOVE.

YOU'RE LATA, RIGHT? YOU GOTTA SCRAM IF YOU WANT TO SAVE THIS MAN...

OR SHALL I JUST KILL YOU? TO KEEP IT SIMPLE?

LEAVE HER ALONE, AHIMSA!

GO !!

A...AUH

GET LOST !!

GIVE HIM UP !

LATA

AAAAAA AWAY! NOW!

MY ARM !!

MY ARM'S HEALED !!

HM ?

LATA, DON'T GO!

LATA ?!

SPLASH

WOAH!

LATA, OUR PROMISE! WE SAID WE'RE GETTING MARRIED!! COME BACK!

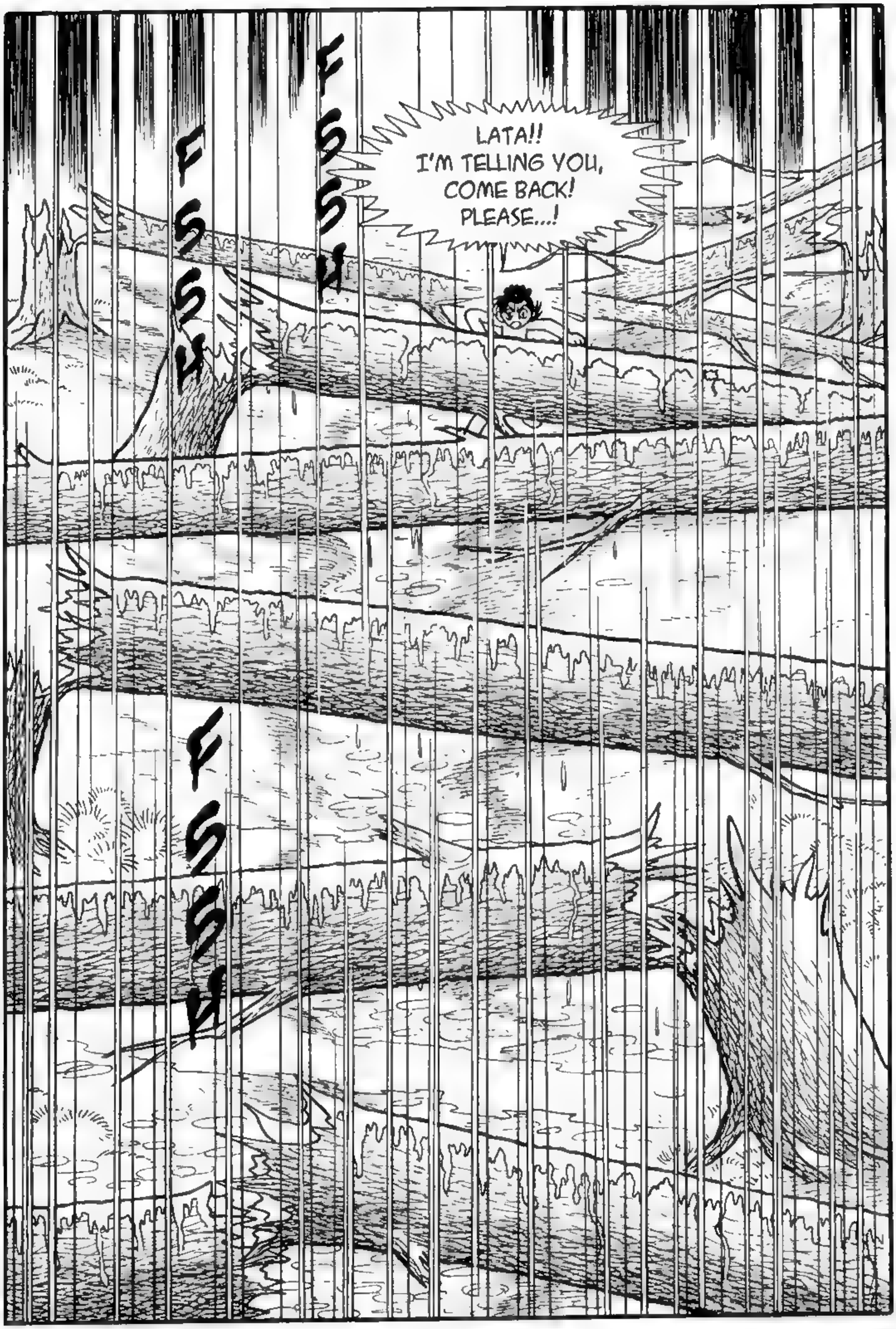
SLAM

AKARI

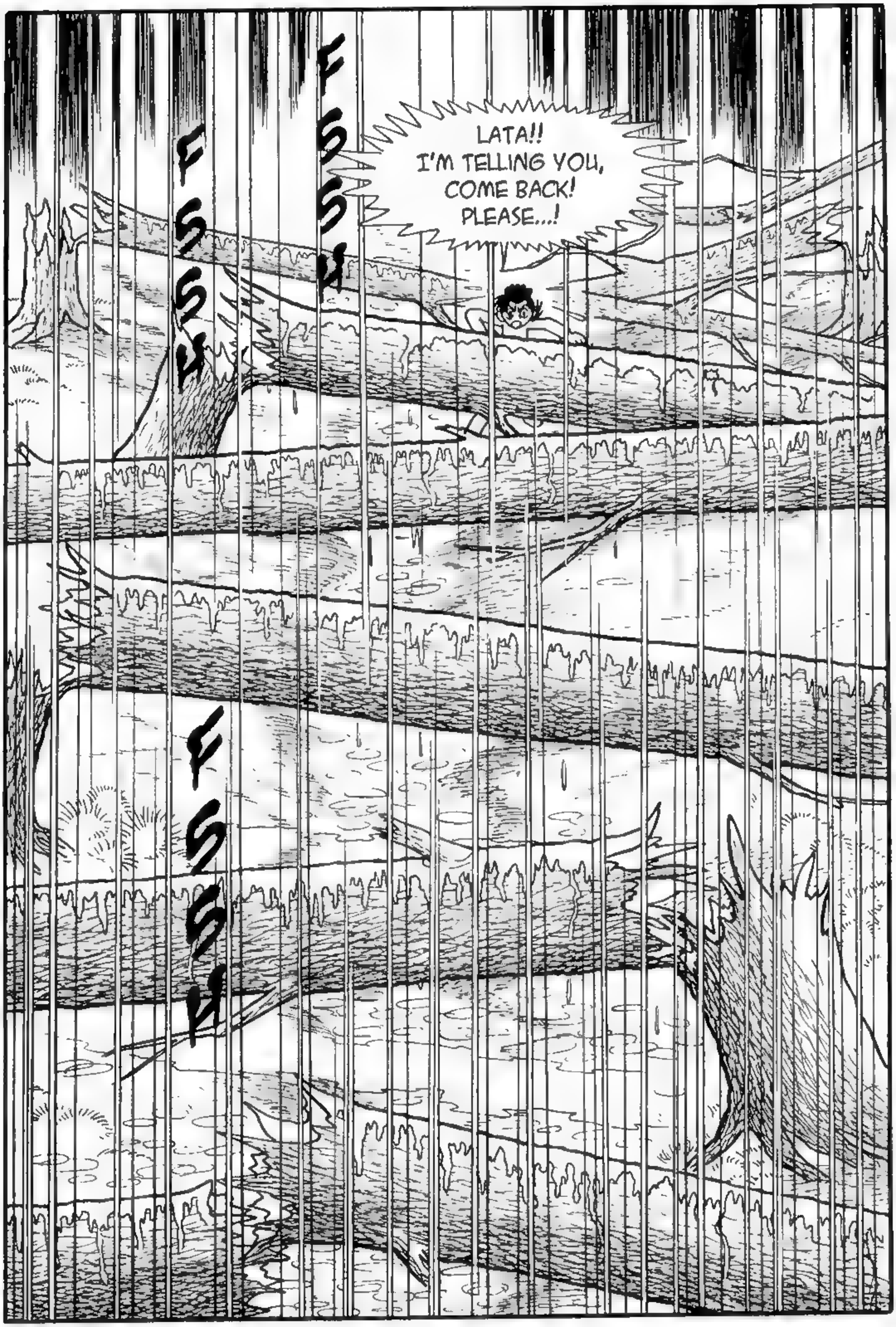
I-
I DON'T
CARE...

IF YOU'RE
THE DEVIL...
NO ONE'S
GETTING
BETWEEN LATA
AND ME !

KRRSH!
KRAK!
LATA!


LATA!!
I'M TELLING YOU,
COME BACK!
PLEASE...!

KRRSH!
KRAK!
LATA!


LATA!!
I'M TELLING YOU,
COME BACK!
PLEASE...!

DAMN IT... SHE'S GONE...

HEY, SISSY

YOU CAN STOP CRYING NOW.

YOU... YOU CHASED HER AWAY!

BAH!!

THUNK

WAKE UP!

LET'S GO...

HOW CUTE OF THE DEVIL. THE MOMENT LATA'S GONE, THE SKY'S CLEAR.

AND THANKS TO THE RAIN, THOSE HORSES LOADED WITH GOLD ARE LEAVING LOVELY HOOF PRINTS.

AH-HA! THESE TRACKS ARE HEADED STRAIGHT FOR KASSAPA'S.

WHO'S THIS KASSAPA?

YOU'VE NEVER HEARD OF HIM? HE'S A BRAHMIN SAINT WHO LIVES AROUND HERE...

WITH A THOUSAND DISCI-PLES.

SO THAT'S WHERE ALL THE GOLD IS GOING!

WE'LL KICK HIS MONK ASS AND OFF WITH THE MONEY.

KASSAPA'S NO WEAKLING...

HM! THEY *ARE* HEADED FOR KASSAPA'S! THIS WON'T BE EASY.

THE THREE BROTHERS KASSAPA ALL HAVE MYSTICAL POWERS...

AND HUNDREDS OF DISCIPLES. TALK ABOUT INFLUENCE.

WHY ARE THESE KASSAPAS RESPECTED SO MUCH?

THEY CONTROL FIRE. THEY CAN MAKE IT OUT OF NOTHING AND HAVE IT DIE AT WILL.

BRAHMIN WORSHIP FIRE, IN GENERAL, BUT THESE BROTHERS ARE DIFFERENT, THEY HAVE SPECIAL MINDS. THEY KNOW FIRE.

LOOK! THE FIRE TEMPLE. WE'RE HERE!

CHAPTER FIVE

THE FIRE SHRINE

STUDDED WITH IMPOSING STONE TOWERS AND DOMES,

URUVELA KASSAPA'S ABODE RESEMBLED A PALACE.

OH GREAT AND SUBLIME SAINT, MASTER KASSAPA...!

WELCOME, BRAHMIN KASHIKA. WHAT HAS BROUGHT YOU HERE?

MASTER KASSAPA, A DEMON IS AFTER ME.

A DEMON ?

DO YOU MEAN THE CHILD OF THE DEVIL?

ANANDA BY NAME?

YES, HIM! YOU MUST HAVE HEARD ABOUT ANANDA, THE RUTHLESS KILLER, THE FUGITIVE BANDIT!

HE IS IMMORTAL. THEY SAY IT'S BECAUSE HE'S POSSESSED.

WHY IS HE AFTER YOU ?

HE WANTS TO ROB ME OF MY HARD-EARNED MONEY.

THIRTY SACKS OF GOLD !!

HA HA HA! I GUESSED AS MUCH. SO YOU'RE STILL...

RAKING IT IN, EH ?

FIVE OF THE SACKS ...

NO, SEVEN ARE GIFTS THAT I'VE BROUGHT TO HUMBLY PRESENT TO YOU.

BUT THAT ANANDA ...

SEVEN BAGS? HM...

HE'S AFTER THE REST OF THE GOLD.

HE PLOTS AS WE SPEAK...

YOU MEAN

HE'S HERE ?

BRAHMIN KASHIKA, ALLOW ME TO DEMONSTRATE MY POWERS.

I SHALL FILL THAT FIRE ALTAR INSTANTLY WITH FLAMES. WATCH!

BOM!

TEN THOUSAND LEAGUES YONDER IS A DESERT LAND. THERE, BURNING WATER GUSHES FROM THE EARTH. THE NATIVES EVEN USE IT TO FIGHT WARS.

I HAD IT BROUGHT ALL THE WAY, AND IT FEEDS THIS ALTAR.

WHAT IS MORE, IN THESE PREMISES YOU'LL FIND GROOVES...

...THAT FILL WITH IT AT MY COMMAND!

THIS FIRE SHRINE ISN'T JUST A PLACE TO LIGHT A FIRE AND PRAY TO THE GODS.

IT IS ALSO WHERE FIRE ITSELF METES OUT DIVINE PUNISHMENT.

THE WINDOWS OF THIS BUILDING CAN BE SHUT. AND ONCE THEY'RE SHUT, THE HALL WITHIN IS SEALED AND PITCH-BLACK.

WHEN A FLAME IS IGNITED HERE, IT CAUSES A WIND INSIDE THAT SLOWLY BUILDS UP POISON. ANY LIVING THING IN THE CHAMBER STOPS BREATHING AND DIES.

S-S-SO THE GODS GRANTED YOU THIS POWER?

NOT EVEN ANANDA CAN LIVE WITHOUT BREATHING!

HA HA HA...I ACQUIRED THE KNOWLEDGE ON MY OWN. YOU LEARN MUCH BY BECOMING FAMILIAR WITH THE WAYS OF HEAVEN AND EARTH. CALL IT SCIENCE.

MASTER! WE HAVE SPOTTED SOME SHADY-LOOKING MEN.

SHADY-LOOKING MEN?

THEY'VE BEEN LURKING THERE FOR OVER AN HOUR NOW.

HM... QUITE SUSPICIOUS INDEED. SO HE'S COME.

WHO, SIR?

HA HA HA... A THIEF...

A RARE ONE

HERE BE THE HOME OF HOLY MONKS

AND WHY NOT TAKE ON A DEMON?

READY WITH THE FIRES? WE MUST WELCOME THIS RARE GUEST OF OURS.

ABLAZE NOW!

FLOF

FLOF

FLOF

三四四

FIRE! WHAT THE HELL ?!

THEY'VE SEEN US...

WE HAVE TO TURN BACK!

BEHIND US TOO!

AIEE...

KRRRR

ALL AROUND US...! WE'RE TRAPPED!

KASSAPA ... IT'S HIS POWER !

MY HORSE GOT BURNED!

ACH EEK

WE'LL GET BURNED TO A CRISP !

DAMMIT, I DON'T BELIEVE THIS...

I SHALL SAVE YOU, ANANDA

HA HA

YOU LET A GIRL DISTRACT YOU, BUT I SEE YOU HAVE REPENTED.

FRET NOT

I'LL NOT WATCH YOU DIE

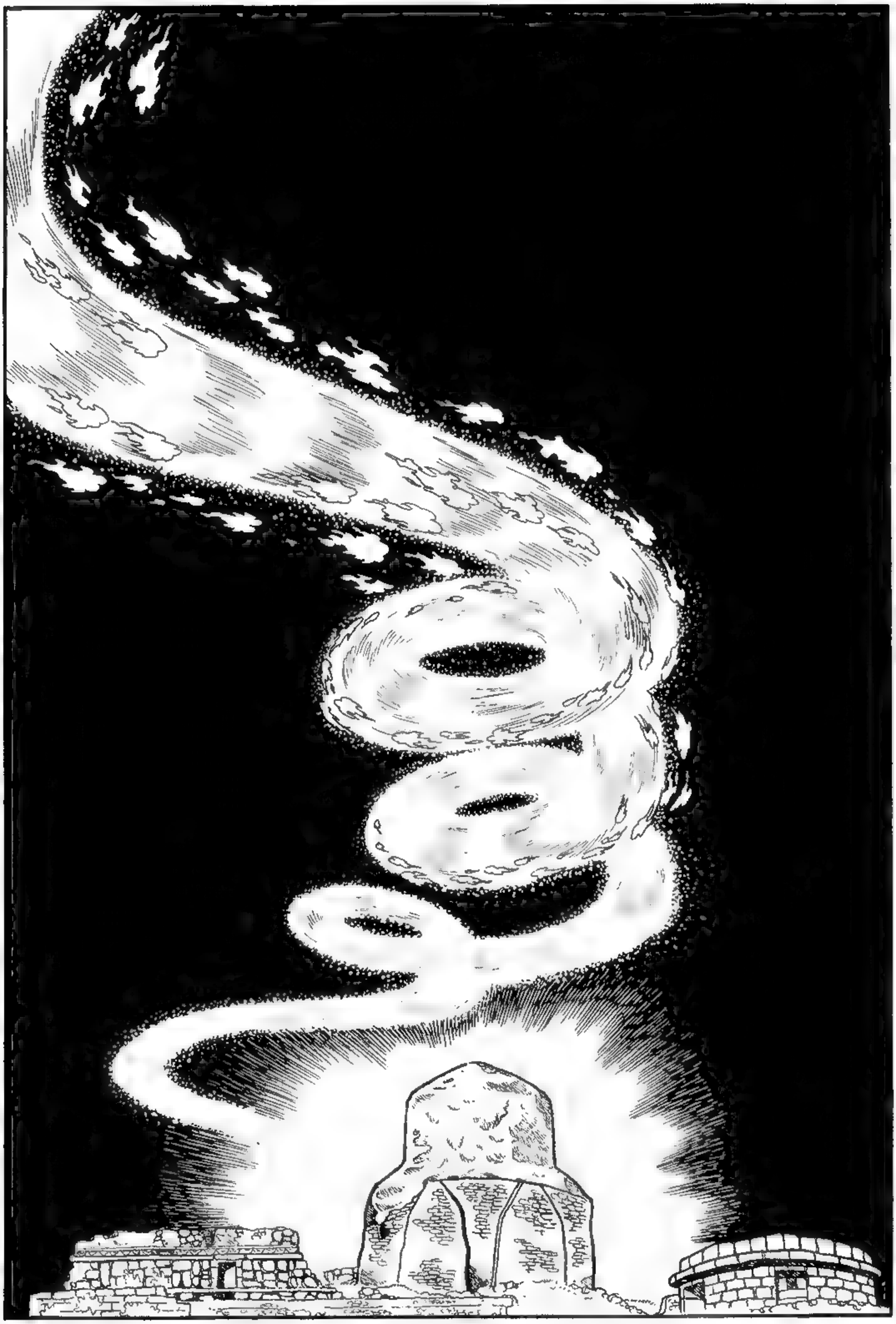
YOUNG MAN, HIDE BEHIND SOME ROCKS! QUICK!

FLAME

AHIMSA, DISMOUNT AND TAKE COVER!

FLAME

LOOK!! THE FLAMES ARE GETTING BLOWN INTO THE AIR!



ROAR

M-MASTER KASSAPA! OUR FIRES HAVE SOARED UP AND ARE COMING OUR WAY!

AH...THUS THE DEMON REVEALS ITS DEMONIC NATURE.

ROAR

HEY. THE BITS OF FIRE ARE GATHERING!

ARGH! THIS IS DANGEROUS. RUN, SIR!

THIS LITTLE SORCERY

IS ONLY THE DEVIL'S PRANK.

KRRRR

KLANG

DON'T YOU SUPPOSE THAT THE SAINT WHO...

USES FIRE ALSO KNOWS HOW TO PUT ONE OUT? HA HA HA

FWOOSH!

FSSSH

FIZZ

FIZZ

EVEN IF THE HEAVENS RAINED FIRE, I'LL NOT LET THIS SANCTUARY BURN.

HA HA HA

KASSAPA'S CONTRIVANCE OPERATED ACCORDING TO THE SAME PRINCIPLE, OF COURSE, AS THE FOUNTAIN. WATER WAS LET DOWN THROUGH A GATE FROM A HILLTOP LAKE AND ALLOWED TO GUSH UP. HE'D HAD THE FIRE SHRINE BUILT BY A LAKE PRECISELY FOR THIS PURPOSE.

YIKES

AIEEE

POISONOUS SNAKES!!

CALM DOWN

PLEASE RETREAT INSIDE!

SHOO, SHOO! ARGH... THEY'RE TOO MANY.

OPEN CAGE THIRTY-THREE!

OPEN 33RD CAGE!

WATER AND FIRE. EEL AND PICKLED PLUM. THERE ARE ALWAYS OPPOSITES IN NATURE.

LIVING THINGS IN PARTICULAR HAVE NEMESES.

SNAKE-HUNTING WEASELS

WE KEEP OVER A HUNDRED DIFFERENT PREDATORS. THESE SNAKE-HUNTING WEASELS ARE RATHER FOND OF THE POISONOUS VARIETY.

O HOLY SAINT !!

I AM TRULY HUMBLED.

HEY, ANANDA... THE WIND'S DIED DOWN.

THE FIRE'S OUT TOO... WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON?

THAT'S WHAT I'D LIKE TO KNOW.

AT ANY RATE, NOW'S OUR CHANCE.

THIS MUST BE THE BACK ENTRANCE. WE OUGHT TO FIND THOSE TIGERS AND SLICE 'EM UP.

I SMELL BEASTS... THIS ROOM ?

AH HA!

KREEE

GRRR

GRRR

GRRR...

LOOK AT ME, TIGERS. ATTACK ME IF YOU CAN.

GRRRR

GRRR

GRRR

URRR

BRRR

GOOD GOING

NOW GET RID OF THEM

SLICE THEIR THROATS !

VENGEANCE

GAR

STOP!

ENOUGH

SO YOU'RE ANANDA. HA HA HA

STOP THIS POINTLESS BUTCHERY. WHY KILL A TIGER?

I SHALL TAKE YOU ON INSTEAD.

WHO THE HELL ARE YOU

YOU FAT-NOSED GEEZER ...

URUVELA KASSAPA

A MONK OF THIS SANCTUARY.

KASSAPA?

CAREFUL! HE'S THE MIGHTY MONK WITH PSYCHIC POWERS.

SPLENDID... SO THAT EXPLAINS WHY HE'S FEARLESS, FACING US ALL ON HIS OWN.

I'D RATHER SLICE UP A HUMAN ANYWAY. BE MY GUEST AND TAKE THEIR PLACE, THEN.

OH?

THEN GLARE AT ME.

HM!

SCARE ME LIKE YOU DID THE TIGERS ...

C'MON, DO IT!

YOU DAMN MONK !!

GRIN

URGH

SH...
IT...

DIE!!!

...UNGH...
DAMMIT...
URGH...
...UH...

AHHH

SO YOUR POWER IS WEAKER THAN MINE!

AT THAT RATE, YOUR GLARE CAN WORK ON TIGERS AND DOGS, BUT NEVER ON ME. HA HA HA HA...

YOUR POWER IS MERELY PSYCHIC. IT'S NOT DEMONIC AT ALL. IT BELONGS TO THE VARIETY THAT A HUMAN CAN ACQUIRE THROUGH TRAINING.

EVEN I HAVE THE POWER. HA HA HA!

I DID TRAIN QUITE HARD...

THONK

THAT'S NICE TO KNOW! PUTS ME AT EASE.

HEH! THANKS, MONK.

THANKS FOR TELLING ME THAT WHAT I TOOK TO BE THE DEVIL IS JUST A KIND OF PSYCHIC POWER! YOU DISPELLED MY FEARS!

...

HOLD ON... PLEASE SPARE MY LIFE. I-I BEG YOU...

OUR TREASURE IS STORED IN THE FIRE CHAMBER. IT'S ALL YOURS NOW.

HAH! I'LL DECIDE WHETHER TO SPARE YOU AFTER I TAKE A LOOK.

HEY, ANANDA, YOU ALL RIGHT? YOU AREN'T AS DEPENDABLE AS I THOUGHT!

SO THIS IS IT. HURRY AND OPEN IT UP.

I WILL.

KASSAPA

ONLY MY VOICE CAN OPEN THIS DOOR. IN THE COLUMNS ARE BAGS WITH A SPECIAL POWDER

CREAK

THAT SHAKES ONLY AT MY VOICE, SETTING PULLEYS IN MOTION!

YOU'LL FIND SEVERAL DOZEN SACKS OF GOLD AT THE ALTAR.

BUDDY, GO TAKE A LOOK.

WOW! PLACE IS LOADED!

COME CHECK THIS OUT, AHIMSA!

HE MUST HAVE RECEIVED IT ALL FROM VISITING WORSHIPPERS.

INCREDIBLE! WHY, YOU COULD BUY A WHOLE COUNTRY WITH THIS MONEY! MAYBE EVEN THE WORLD!

HOW'LL WE CARRY IT?

WELL, WE'VE GOT HIM AS A HOSTAGE. WE'LL HAVE HIM ROUND UP FIFTY HORSES.

KNUCK KNUCK KNUCK KNUCK

CHUD

KNUCK

HEY!! THE EXIT!

KASSAPA! WHAT'RE YOU UP TO?

KNUCK KNUCK

DAMN IT. IT'S A TRAP. WE'RE LOCKED IN...

KTUNK

HAH HAH HAH HAH

IT'S ALL RIGHT, EVERYONE. THE BANDITS HAVE BEEN TRAPPED IN THE FIRE CHAMBER.

LET US LIGHT IT UP AND ROAST THE BANDITS. HOW WOULD YOU LIKE THAT?

IT'S WHAT THEY DESERVE FOR VIOLATING A SANCTUARY. HA HA HA

LIGHT THE ALTAR !!

FWOOM

THE ALTAR LIT UP ON ITS OWN. WATCH OUT, AHIMSA.

FIRE CAME ON AS SOON AS IT GOT DARK. PRETTY FANCY.

IT'S SOME CON-TRAPTION. WHAT NEXT...?

...THOUGHT THERE'D BE MORE ...ALL IT'S DOING IS BURN.

WHAT'S THAT MONK TRYING TO DO?

...

NOTHING SPECIAL. JUST THE FIRE BURNING... AWFULLY HOT I GOTTA SAY...

THIS IS... I-I REALLY AM SUFFOCATING !!

ALMOST SUF-FOCATING

SAME HERE !!

"CHOKE"

ACH! I...I'M DYING...!!

HELP ME, DEMON! P-PLEASE. HELP...

ANANDA

WHAT IS THIS NOW !!

WHAT HAPPENED ?

WHAT'S THE MATTER?!

CAN'T YOU HEAR ME?

I DON'T UNDER-STAND ...

THIS TIME... THIS IS BEYOND MY KEN TOO.

THAT MONK !!

HOW DARE HE...

I'LL RUB YOU OUT IF YOU KILL ANANDA!

DON'T YOU DARE

WHEN YOU LIGHT A FIRE INSIDE A SEALED ROOM, IT SUCKS THE AIR AND SUFFOCATES ANY LIVING CREATURE. THIS, TOO, IS SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE.

REMEMBER IT WELL!

TEACHER, I HAVE A QUESTION.

WHEN YOU SAY FIRE SUCKS AIR, DO YOU MEAN IT HAS A MOUTH ?

OF COURSE! THE FLICKERS OF A FIRE ARE ITS MOUTH.

THEY LOOK MORE LIKE TONGUES TO ME...

ARE YOU A FOOL ?

IF IT'S GOT A TONGUE THEN IT'S GOT A MOUTH! BE MORE RATIONAL, ALL OF YOU!

MASTER!

REPORT !

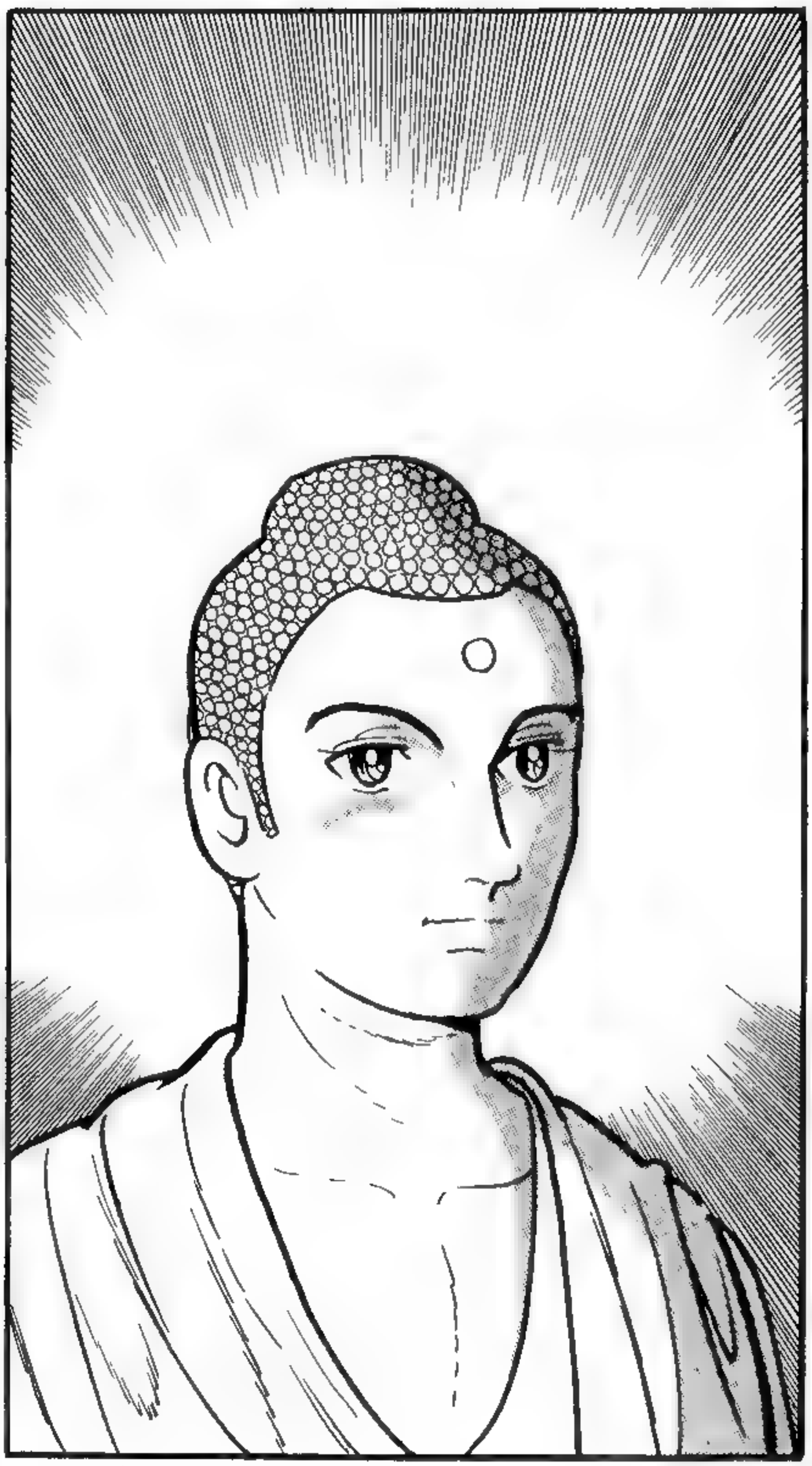
WHAT'S THE MATTER? MORE BANDITS?

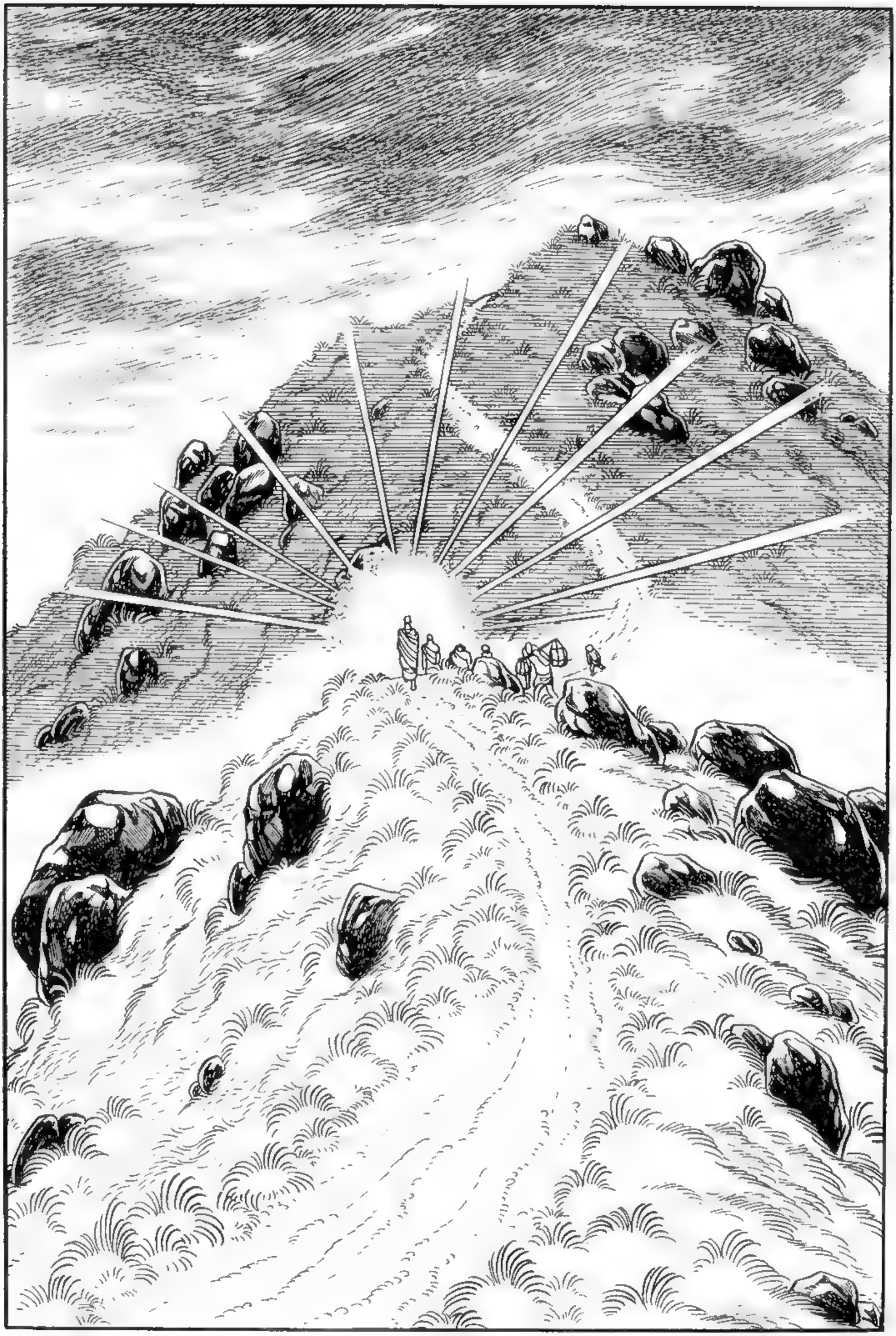
N-NO, SIR... A GROUP OF HERETICS IS COMING THIS WAY.

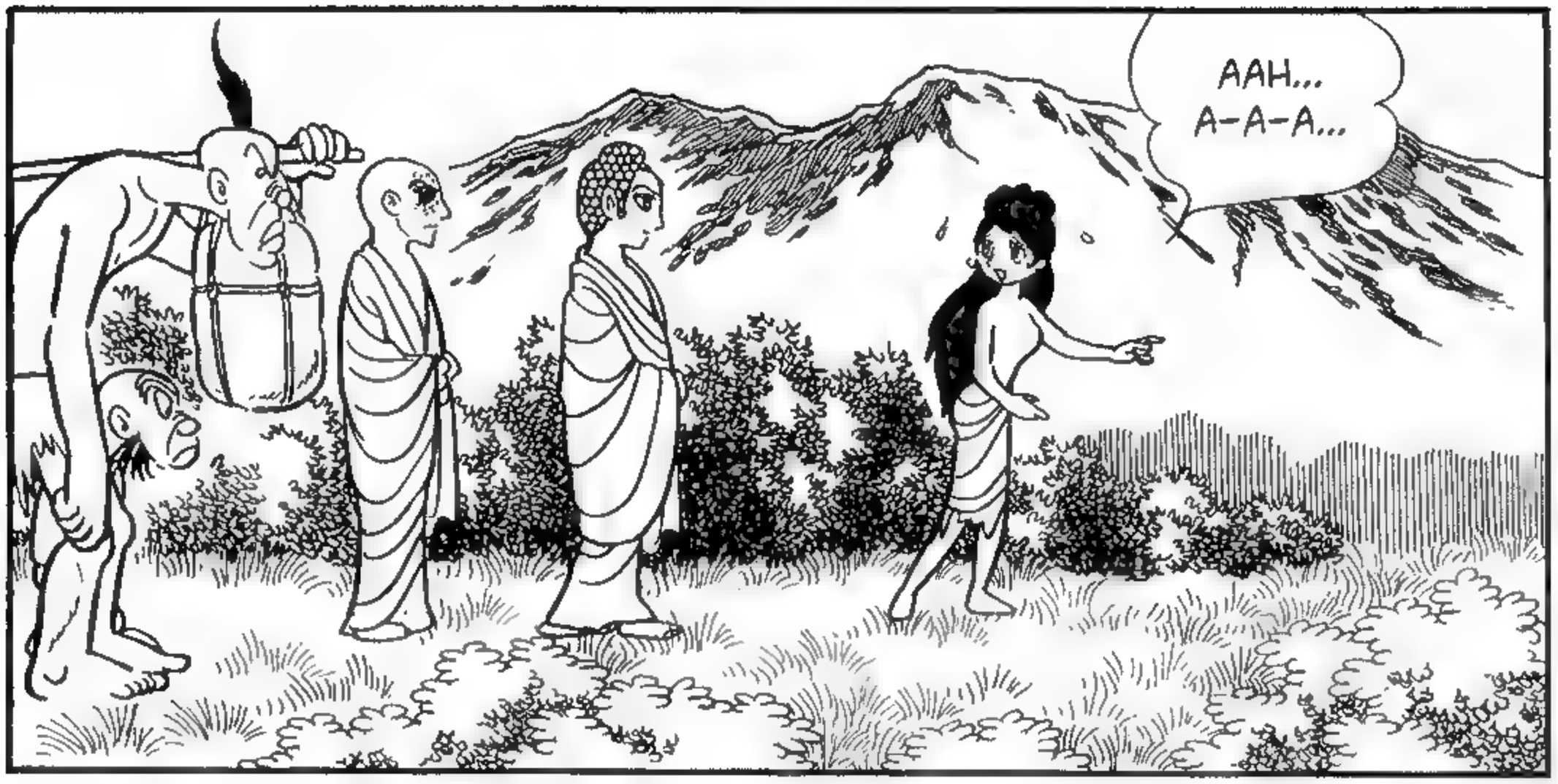
O-ONE OF THEM... H-HAS A H-H-HALO.

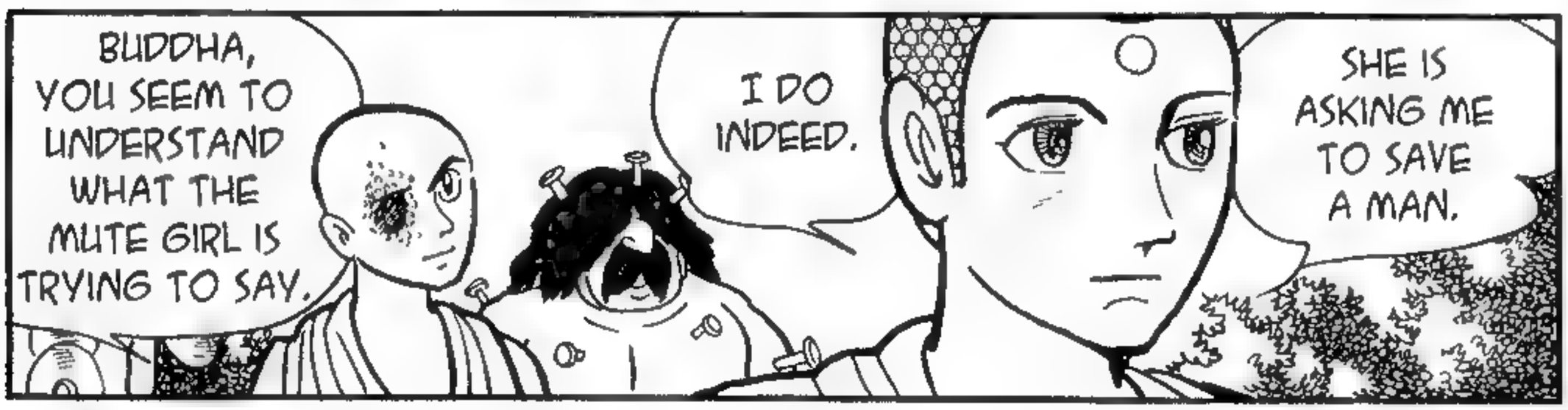
A HALO? ABSURD! IF IT'S TRUE, THEN WE'RE TALKING ABOUT A GOD.

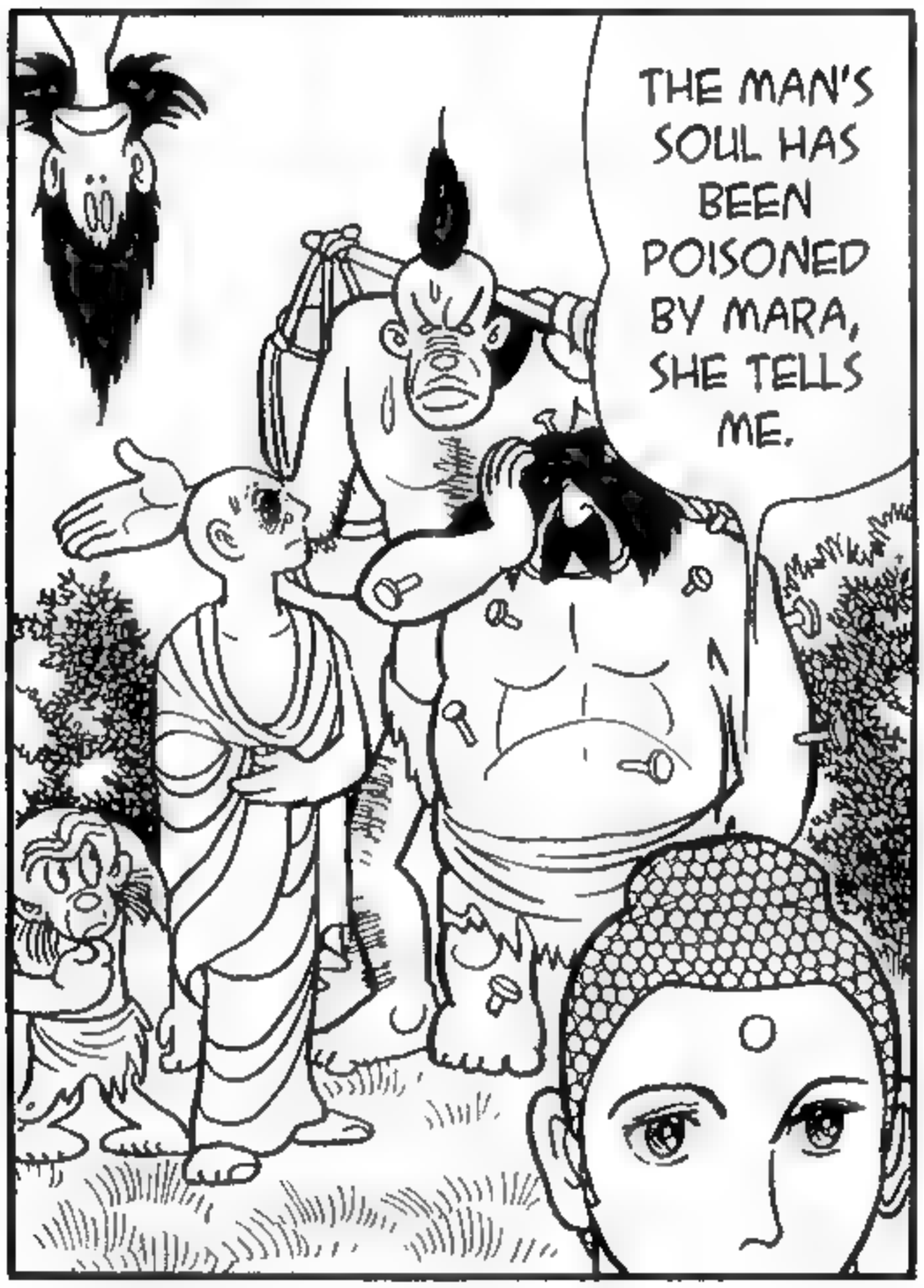
WHERE? WHERE IS THE ONE?

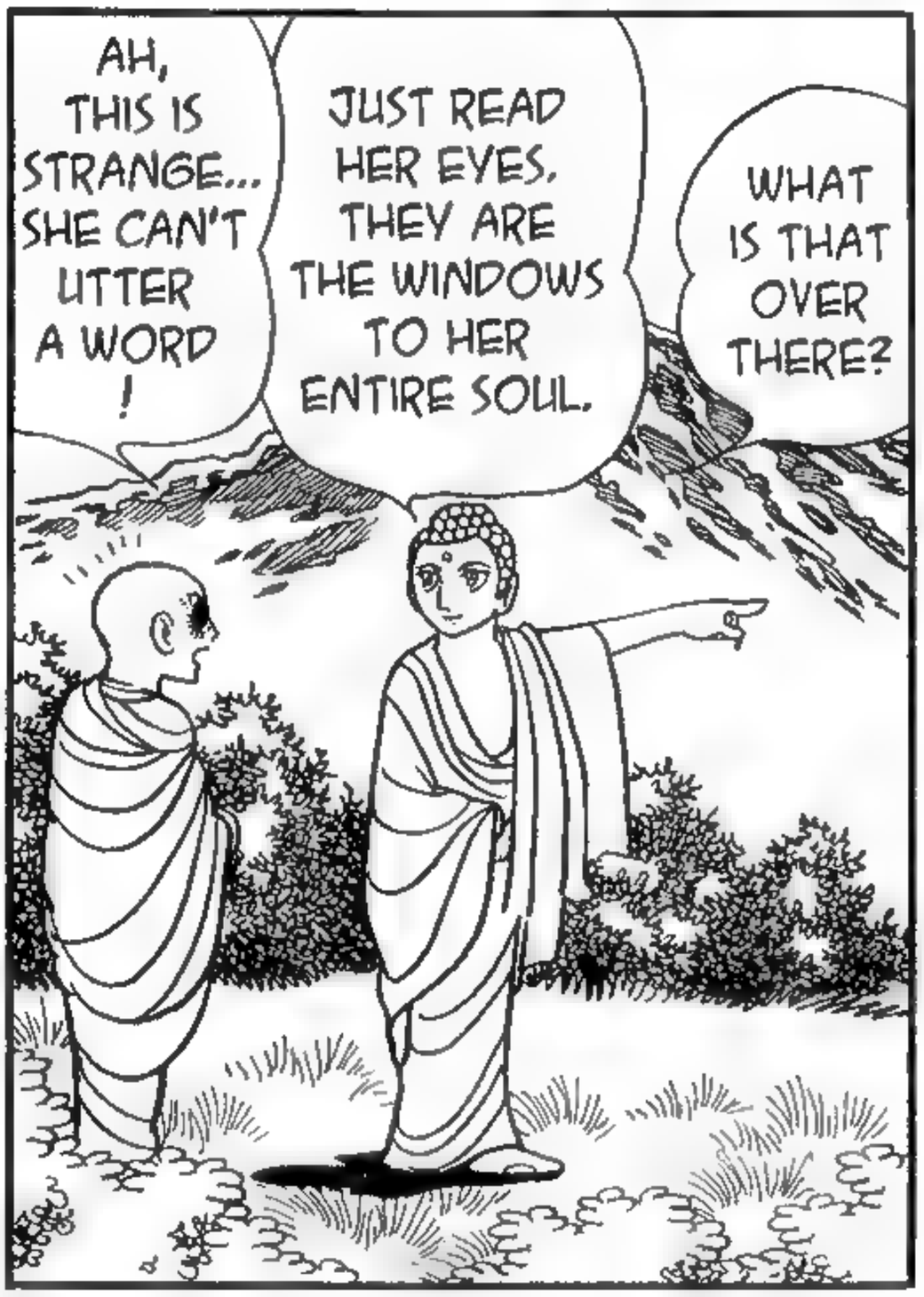





AAH...
A-A-A...


BUDDHA, YOU SEEM TO UNDERSTAND WHAT THE MUTE GIRL IS TRYING TO SAY.
I DO INDEED.
SHE IS ASKING ME TO SAVE A MAN.


THE MAN'S SOUL HAS BEEN POISONED BY MARA, SHE TELLS ME.


AH, THIS IS STRANGE... SHE CAN'T UTTER A WORD !
JUST READ HER EYES. THEY ARE THE WINDOWS TO HER ENTIRE SOUL.
WHAT IS THAT OVER THERE?

OH, WOW! THAT'S THE FIRE SHRINE OF THE FAMOUS BRAHMIN KASSAPA.

HE'S SAID TO HAVE A THOUSAND DISCIPLES.

KASSAPA? AH, YES... I HAVE HEARD THE NAME.

UHH AH

HM... SO YOUR LOVER HAS GONE THERE AND NOT COME BACK YET.

BUDDHA ...

WAIT HERE. I SHALL RESCUE THIS MAN.

YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE ATTEMPTING. KASSAPA IS A POWERFUL LEADER, BOUND TO REJECT ANY REQUEST MADE BY A HETERODOX MONK.

IT WILL GO FINE. REST EASY. I SHALL BE BACK BY TOMORROW MORNING.

YOU OVER THERE! ANNOUNCE YOURSELF.

I AM BUDDHA, AND I SEEK A MAN. IT IS NOT TO ISSUE ANY CHALLENGE THAT I HAVE COME... I WOULD LIKE TO MEET YOUR MASTER KASSAPA.

DID HE SAY BUDDHA? THAT MEANS "AWAKENED ONE"... WHAT A BUFFOON.

LET HIM IN!

BUDDHA, OR SO CALLED, I CAN SEE THAT YOU HAVE TRAINED FOR MANY YEARS, BUT YOU ARE MOST PROBABLY NOT FEELING TOO COMFORTABLE HERE.

MASTER KASSAPA, I BELIEVE A BEDEVILED YOUNG MAN CALLED ANANDA HAS COME HERE.

AH HA... ANANDA. YES, HE DID COME HERE. COULD HE BE ONE OF YOUR DISCIPLES? HA HA HA

HE'S NOT MY DISCIPLE. I'VE COME TO SAVE HIM.

WELL, YOU WON'T. THIS IS A HOPELESS VILLAIN WHO'S QUITE FULL OF HIMSELF, AND NOT ONLY WILL YOU NOT SAVE—

WHERE IS THE MAN.

I TRAPPED HIM INSIDE THE SACRED DOME. HE'S HALF-DEAD. YOU CAN WAIT FOREVER, BUT HE WON'T BE COMING OUT.

IN THAT CASE, MAY I...

SPEND A NIGHT IN THAT DOME ?

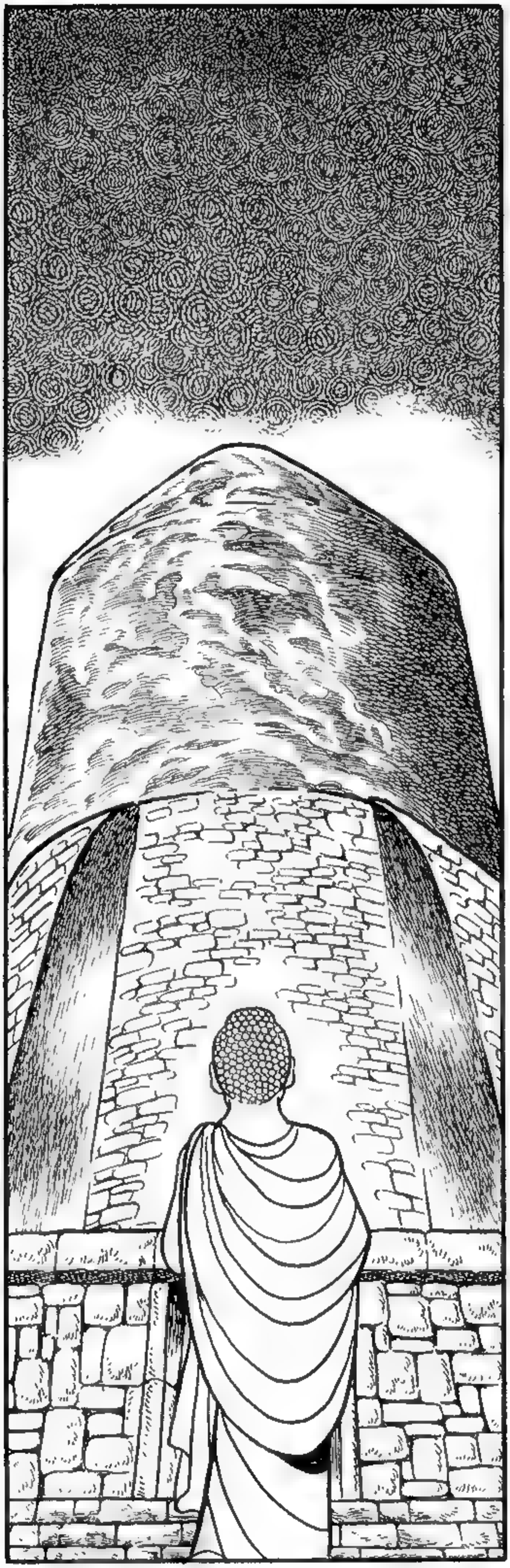
YOU MUST BE KIDDING! YOU'D BE CRAZY TO GO IN THERE NOW.

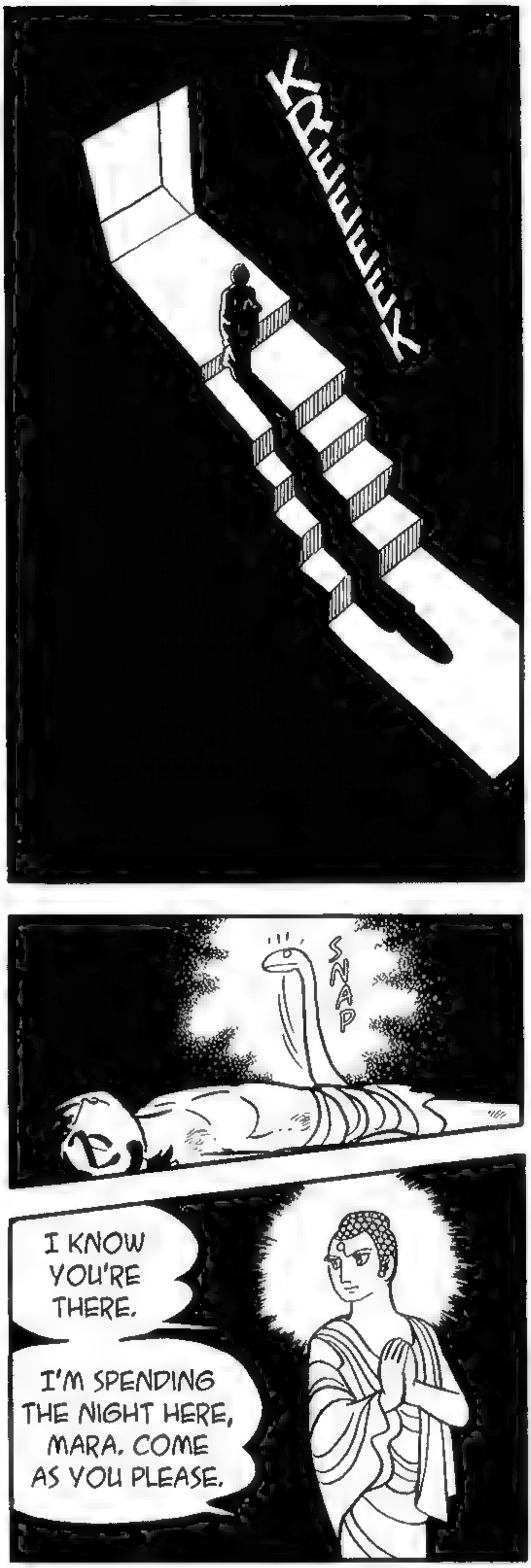
HE'S POSSESSED BY A SNAKE DEMON THAT COULD KILL YOU IN AN INSTANT! OF COURSE, IT'D BE DIFFERENT WITH ME...

I'LL BE FINE. I WON'T CAUSE YOU TROUBLE. ALLOW ME TO SPEND THE NIGHT.

YOU WANT TO DIE? FINE THEN, DO AS YOU PLEASE.

GOOD DAY




SNAP
I KNOW YOU'RE THERE.
I'M SPENDING THE NIGHT HERE, MARA. COME AS YOU PLEASE.

DEAR MONK

O MONK O MONK HELP

DEAR MONK... MY BELOVED HAS COLLAPSED, HE'S STOPPED BREATHING. SAVE HIM WITH YOUR BLESSED POWERS.

QUIET, YOU DEVIL !!

YOU CAN'T FOOL ME BY DISGUISING YOURSELF AS A GIRL. I KNOW WHAT YOU ARE!!

ME, A DEVIL? MONK, YOU'RE BADLY MISTAKEN!

THAT GURU TRAPPED US HERE, ACCUSING US OF DISOBEYING HIS TEACHINGS.

MY BELOVED IS ON THE BRINK OF DEATH... PLEASE... HELP HIM...

ENOUGH

DON'T THINK YOU CAN FOOL ME!

SHOW YOURSELF !!

YOU REFUSE TO SEE ...

...AND HELP, EVEN AS I BEG YOU?

YOU HAVE NO SHADOW! A FIRE BURNS OVER YOU ...

WHERE'S YOUR SHADOW?

SOMETIMES YOU JUST FORGET TO DRAW ONE, OKAY?!

NITPICKER !!

HMM, SO AT LAST YOU SHOW YOURSELF.

SPITE! ENVY!
WRATH! VENGEANCE!
IN ALL HELLFIRES
BATHE AND BURN!!

STILL NOT SCARED ?

ONE BITE WILL POUR VENOM INTO YOUR HEART!

AGH!!

WHAT WAS THAT?! THE MOMENT I TRIED TO BITE HIM, AN INTENSE LIGHT REPELLED ME...

ONCE MORE THEN !!

FLASH!

AIEEE!!

FLASH!!

CHAPTER SIX

KASSAPA'S CONVERSION

DA...MN YOU.
I'LL CRUSH YOU
AGAINST
THE STONE WALL.

THAT'S ENOUGH, DEVIL!

IT'S USELESS! YOU CANNOT INTIMIDATE ME.

YOU WILL ONLY END UP HARMING ANANDA IN THE PROCESS.

THERE IS ONLY ONE WAY TO SAVE ANANDA! AND THAT IS FOR YOU TO LET GO OF HIM.

I CAN HELP ANANDA. THAT IS EXACTLY WHY I CAME HERE.

IF YOU WANT ME TO SAVE HIS LIFE, BE GONE AND NEVER COME BACK.

URR... I CAN'T STAND THIS! HOW CAN I QUIT WHEN I'VE COME THIS FAR!

I'VE DEVOTED MY LIFE TO DESTROYING YOUR SOUL.

I BROUGHT UP ANANDA AS MY OWN SON TO UNLEASH HIM ON YOU...

AH, NOW I SEE...

I CAN'T LEAVE ANANDA NOW!!

BECAUSE I HATE YOU! YOU!!

LONG AGO, WHEN I FOUGHT GOD...

...I WAS MADE TO SUFFER TERRIBLY.

TO KNOW THAT THE LOATHSOME ONE HAS SET YOU UP AS SOME SAINT...

IT MAKES ME WANT TO TEAR YOU APART! WITH MY OWN CLAWS!

BUT I MYSELF CANNOT TOUCH YOU. SO I THOUGHT TO SEND A HUMAN TO FIGHT YOU.

THEN YOU'VE MADE A GRIEVOUS MISTAKE. HUMANS AREN'T DEMONS. THEIR FLESH IS AS DELICATE AS SOIL.

IT'S NO USE POSSESSING ANANDA!

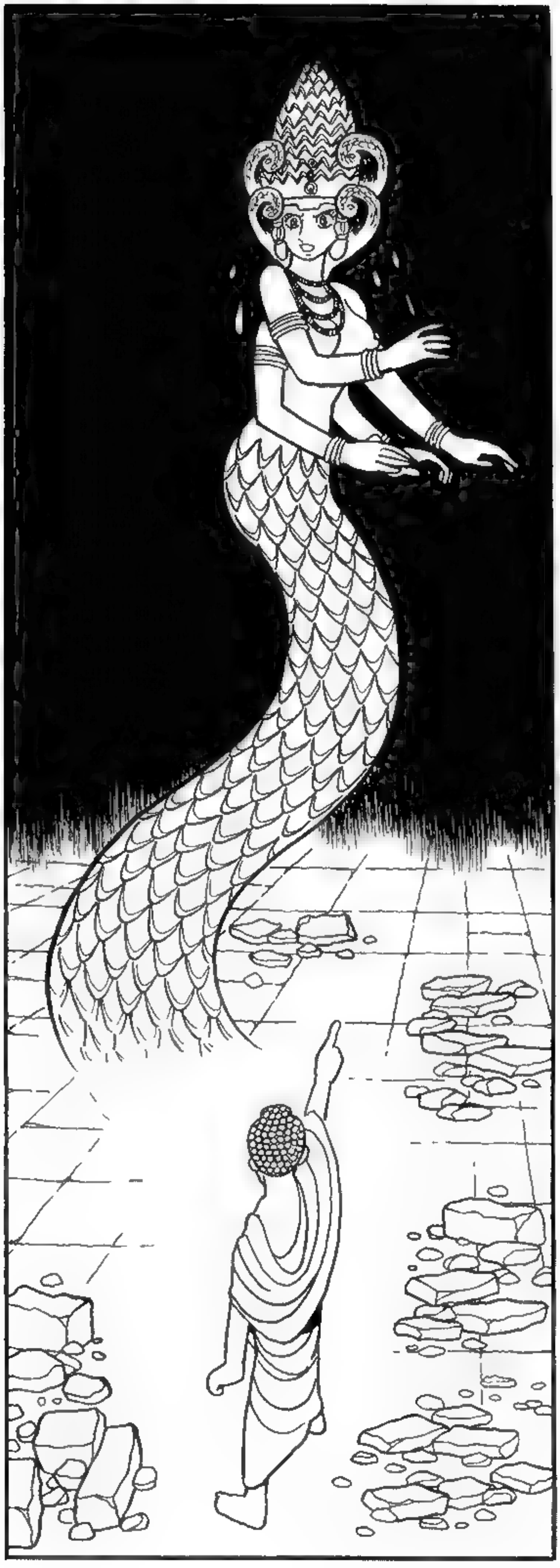
SHUT UP!

BEGONE!

D-DON'T THINK I'VE GIVEN UP... I'LL GET YOU ONE DAY...

I SHALL LOOK AFTER ANANDA NOW AND GUIDE HIM.

GET LOST



BUDDHA...
DON'T FORGET!
I'LL TORMENT
YOU FOR THE
REST OF YOUR LIFE.
YOU'LL SUFFER THE
PAIN OF DEATH...

OVER AND
OVER!
AND AS YOU
SCREAM AND
WRITHE, HOW
I SHALL LAUGH!
MHA HA HA
MHA HA...

SILENCE

SHE WON'T BE BACK FOR A WHILE.

ANAN-DA
HOLD ON.

NOW THEN... FIRST I HAVE TO REVIVE THESE TWO.

HALF-DEAD. THEY'RE ON THE THRESHOLD OF THE REALM OF DEATH.

I'LL JUST HAVE TO PULL THEM BACK...

A VISCOUS ABYSS! THIS IS BAD...

I'M HERE TO RESCUE YOU, ANANDA. COME.

WAKE UP

MUSTER THE STRENGTH TO LIVE.

YOU MUSTN'T SINK. AT THE BOTTOM OF THIS ABYSS LIES THE REALM OF DEATH!

YOU MUSTN'T GIVE UP!

COME

WE'LL GET OUT OF THIS PLACE.

YOU CAN LIVE.

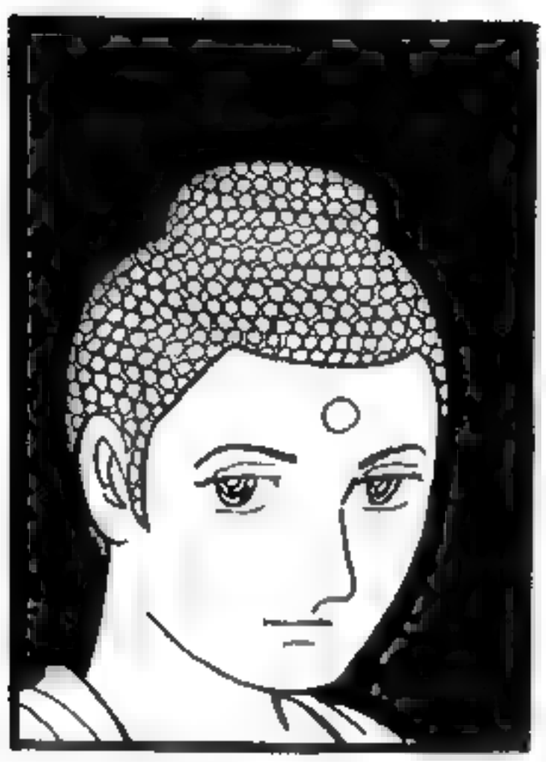
PLEASE...

UHH... MMM AH...

GOOD. YOU'RE ALL RIGHT NOW.

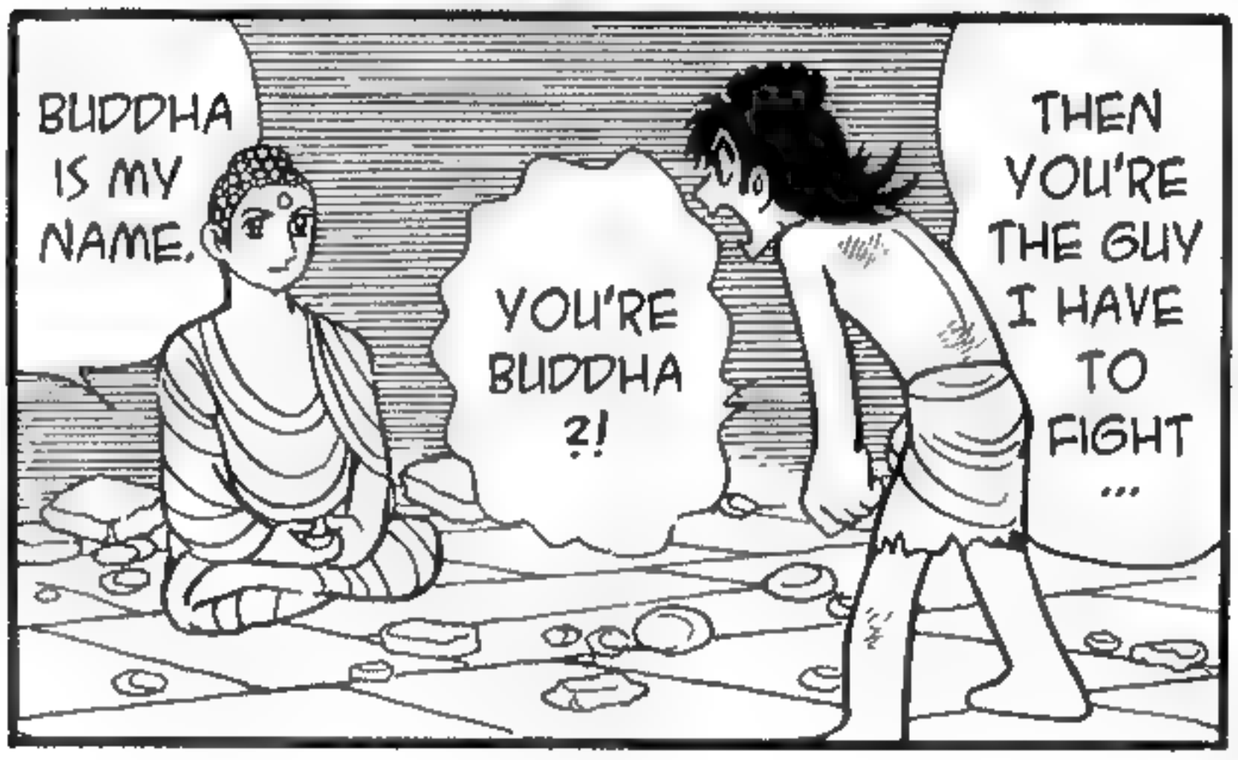
WHERE A-AM I?
WHAT WAS I DOING ...?

AHIMSA...



HI
ANANDA

HOW COME YOU KNOW MY NAME ?
WHO ARE YOU ?!


BUDDHA IS MY NAME.
YOU'RE BUDDHA ?!
THEN YOU'RE THE GUY I HAVE TO FIGHT ...

YOU BASTARD ...

!

WEIRD

I FEEL AS IF WE'VE ALREADY MET... WHERE, THOUGH?

OF COURSE WE HAVE. IN YOUR SOUL, THAT IS WHERE. YOU WERE SINKING INTO THE ABYSS OF DEATH, AND I SAVED YOU.

WHAT?!

YOU WISEASS...

...

YOU'RE RIGHT. SOME-WHERE

FAR, FAR AWAY...

YOU HELD UP MY BODY...

I WAS BARELY SAVED.

...

...WHY ...A GUY LIKE ME ?

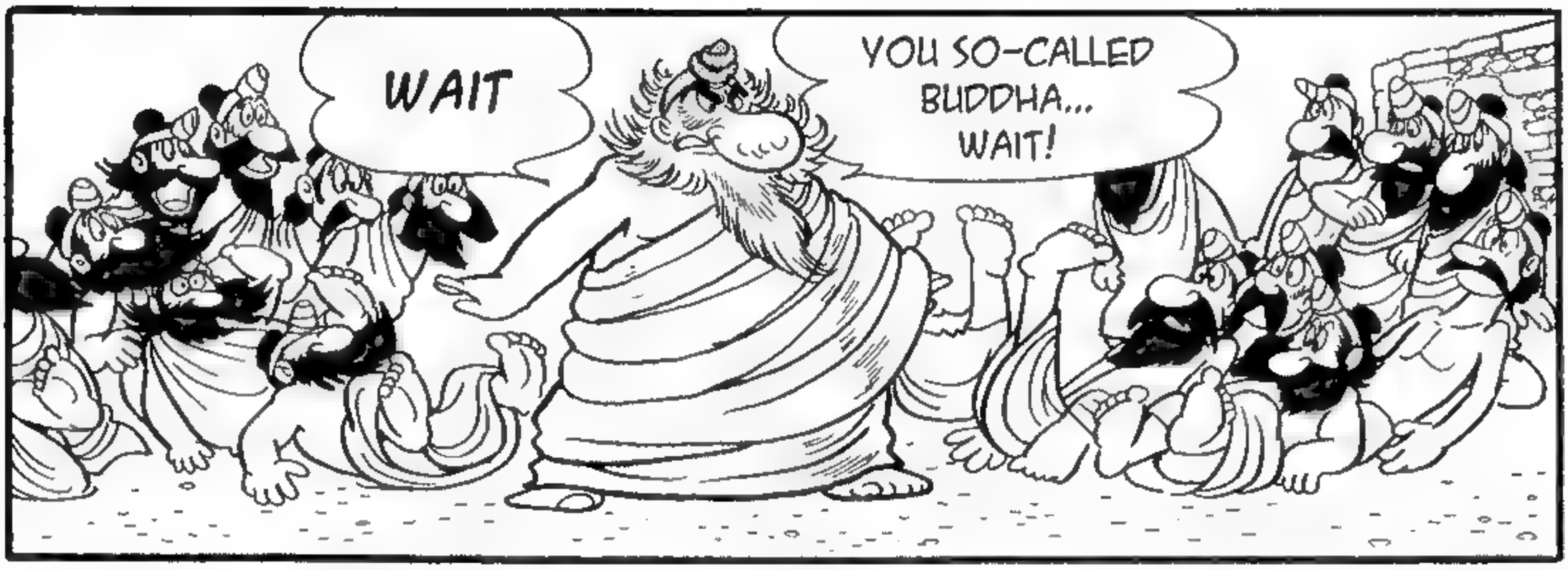
LOOK AT THAT! HE'S COME OUT STANDING !

THE DAREDEVIL IS ALIVE !

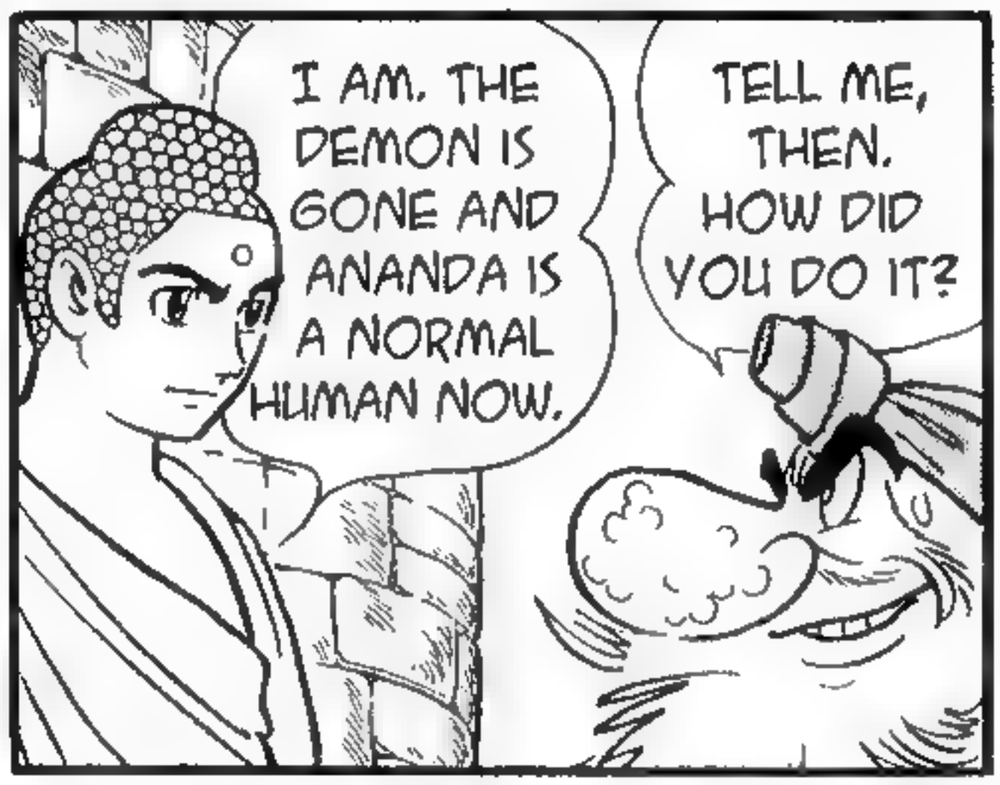
THAT'S ANANDA BEHIND HIM.

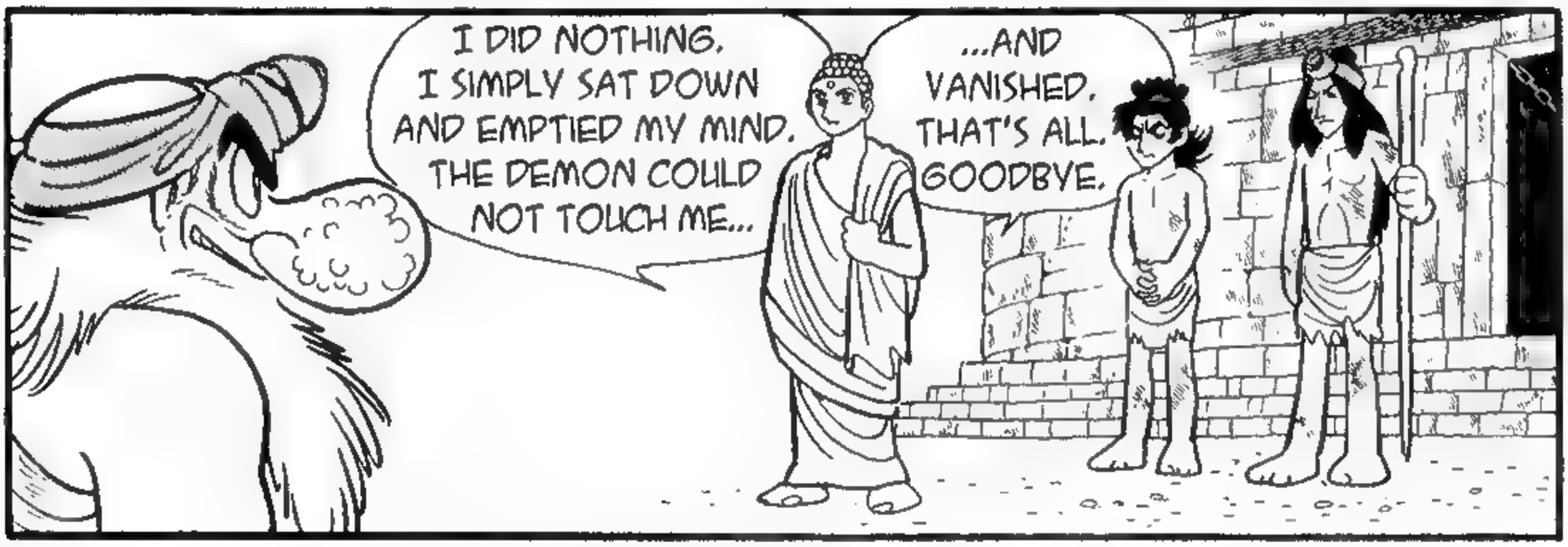
AND THE OTHER BANDIT.

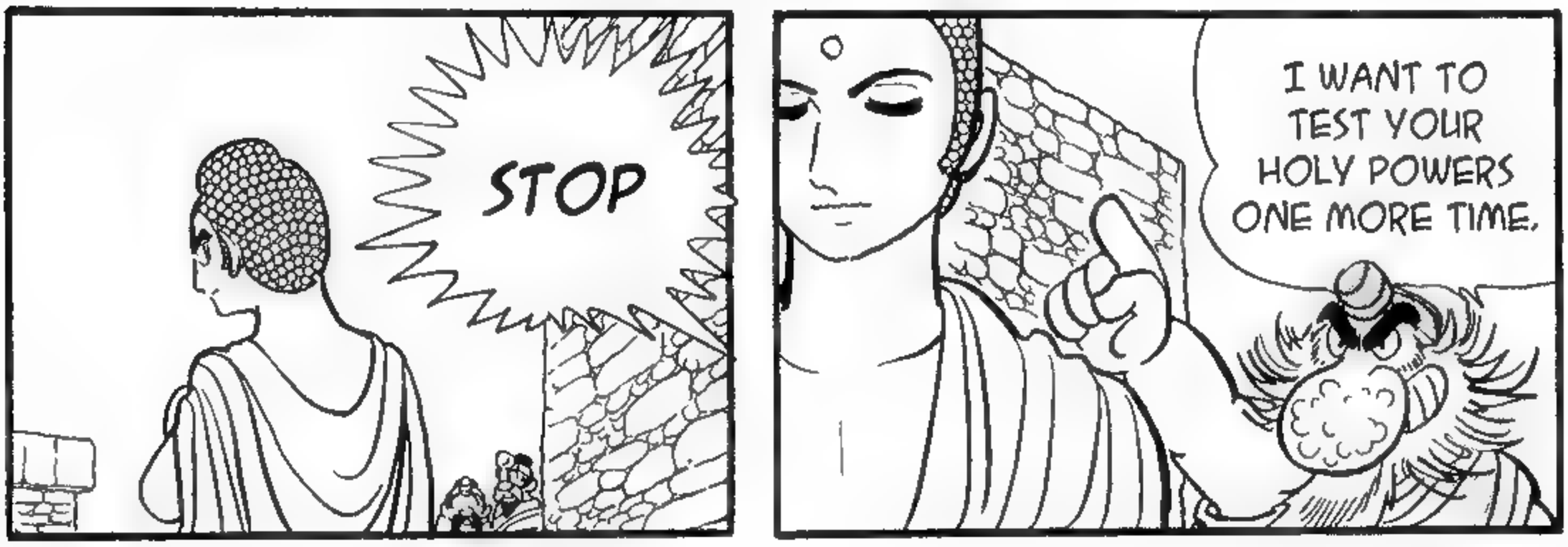
AS WE AGREED, THIS MAN WILL LEAVE WITH ME.


WAIT
YOU SO-CALLED BUDDHA... WAIT!

SO YOU'VE MANAGED TO RESCUE ANANDA.
ARE YOU TELLING ME YOU GOT RID OF THE DEVIL THAT HAUNTED HIM?


I AM. THE DEMON IS GONE AND ANANDA IS A NORMAL HUMAN NOW.
TELL ME, THEN. HOW DID YOU DO IT?


I DID NOTHING. I SIMPLY SAT DOWN AND EMPTIED MY MIND. THE DEMON COULD NOT TOUCH ME...
...AND VANISHED. THAT'S ALL. GOODBYE.


STOP
I WANT TO TEST YOUR HOLY POWERS ONE MORE TIME.

YOU DO SEEM TO BE A TRAINED ASCETIC, BUT UNLESS I WITNESS YOUR POWERS WITH MY OWN EYES...

I CANNOT ACCEPT THAT YOU CHASED OFF THE DEMON, YOU SEE?

BEHIND ME ARE SOME LOGS. CHOP THEM UP WITHOUT USING YOUR HANDS!

I CAN DO IT, AND YOU SHOULD TOO IF YOU'RE TRULY HOLY.

HE'S SAT DOWN. MAYBE HE'S THINKING HOW HE'D DO IT?

I SHALL GIVE YOU AN HOUR. IF YOU CAN SPLIT A SINGLE ONE, THEN GOOD FOR YOU.

KRAK
KRAK
KRAK

KRAKK
KRAK

THEY'RE SPLIT-TING...
ALMOST THERE

KRAK!
KRAK
KRAK
KRAK

WOW...!!
FTUNK

THIS FELLOW CAN DO EVERYTHING I CAN DO! HE COULD UNDERMINE MY AUTHORITY...

SINCE ANCIENT TIMES, PEOPLE CONSIDERED HOLY HAVE BEEN THOUGHT TO POSSESS THE POWER OF PSYCHOKINESIS TO SOME DEGREE. USING SUCH ABILITIES, IT IS SAID, THEY COULD PERFORM MIRACLES AND CURE THE ILL TO A CERTAIN EXTENT. THE BUDDHA TOO WOULD HAVE HAD THIS TALENT, ALLOWING HIM TO ACCOMPLISH A FEAT OF TERRIFIC ENERGY SUCH AS THIS.

HA! THAT WAS QUITE GOOD. BUT I WOULDN'T GET CARRIED AWAY JUST YET.

LET'S SEE YOU IGNITE THIS PILE OF FIREWOOD WITHOUT TOUCHING IT.

YES. IF YOU LIGHT IT UP I SHALL ACCEPT THAT YOU ARE INDEED A SAINT.

I AM NOT A SHOW-GROUND MAGI-CIAN!

I INSIST THAT YOU TRY. IF YOU FAIL, YOU MUST BOW DOWN AND BECOME MY DISCIPLE.

I WILL BE NO ONE'S DISCIPLE AND SOLICIT NO ONE'S TEACHINGS !

BOM!

WH-WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!

HA HA HA, YOU MONKS! SEE HOW THE PILE'S LIT UP WITHOUT THAT MAN TOUCHING IT. YOU WERE BEING UNFAIR SO I THOUGHT I'D GIVE HIM A HAND.

DON'T JUST STAND THERE. LET OUT SOME WATER!

IT'S BEEN SO DRY THE FIRE'S BEGUN TO SPREAD!

OOPS

MASTER! THE WATER ISN'T COMING.

NOT A SINGLE DROP!

WHAT? HOW COULD THAT BE?!

IT'S GOT TO BE A BAD PIPE !

FIX IT ...

OR ELSE WE'RE IN BIG TROUBLE.

NO, SIR, IT'S THE RESERVOIR.

WHAT ?!

WE'VE HAD A DROUGHT FOR SO LONG. THE RESERVOIR ABOVE IS COMPLETELY EMPTY.

THAT CAN'T BE. I DON'T BELIEVE THIS.

NO...

THEN THE FIRE WILL ONLY SPREAD.

IT'S YOUR FAULT. LOOK, OUR HOME IS BURNING DOWN! YOU MUST DO SOMETHING...

PLEASE

HADN'T YOU TOLD ME TO LIGHT THE FIRE ?

AIEEE! THE FIRE'S SPREAD TO THE DOME. RUN!

NO! PUT OUT THE FIRE.

HELP!

ARGH! THAT WAS OIL YOU JUST SPLASHED ON IT.

MASTER KASSAPA!

ESSSH
ESSSH
ESSSH
THE HEAT OF THE FIRE CREATED A POWERFUL UPDRAFT AND SUMMONED CLOUDS THAT BURST INTO A DOWNPOUR.

ESS
SHAH

RUMBLE

ROLL

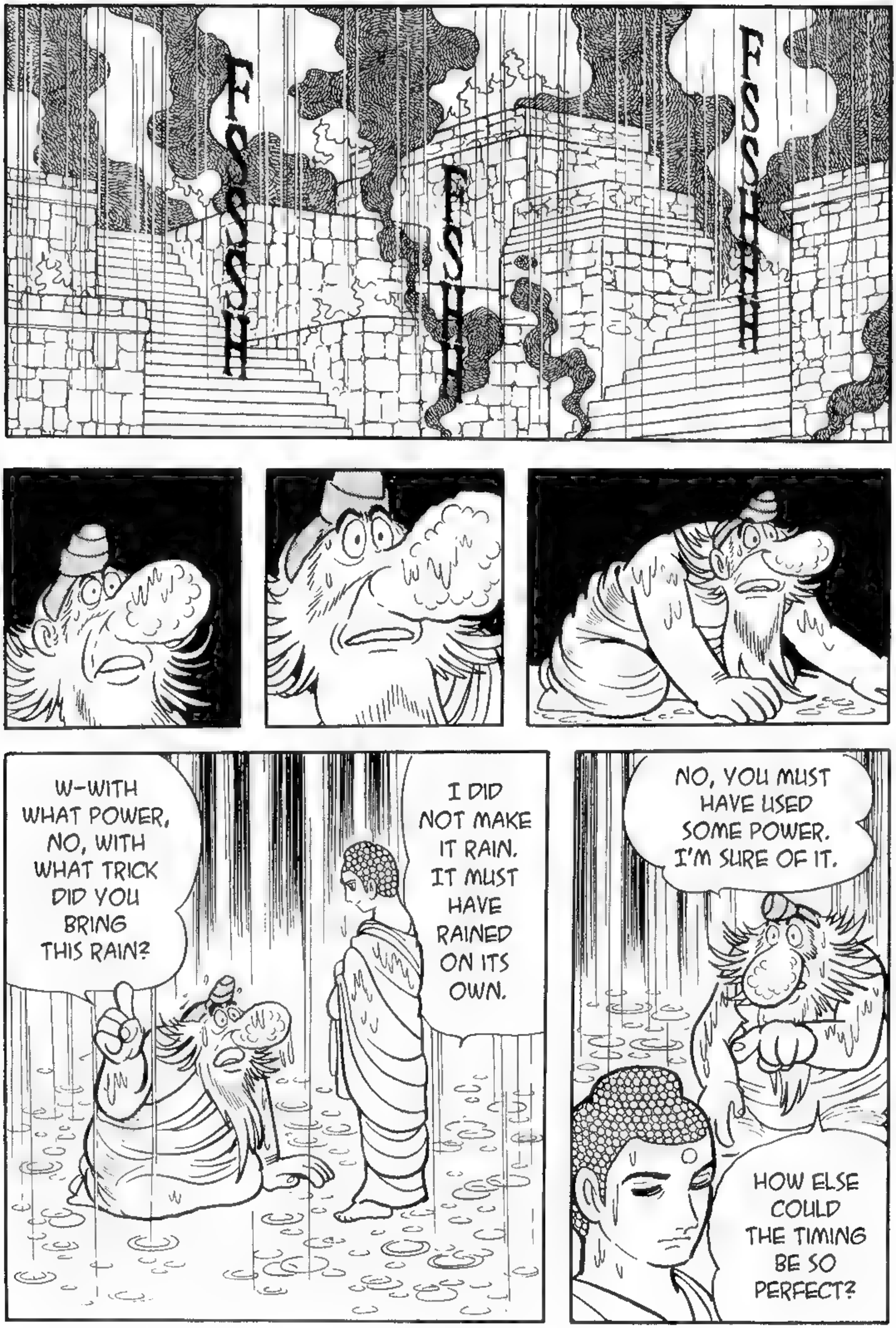
RAIN!! IT'S RAINING! HOW COULD IT, IN THIS DROUGHT?!

SSSH

SSSH

MASTER KASSAPA, THE FIRE IS GOING OUT...

PLEASE, LOOK!


FSSSH
FSSSH
FSSSH
W-WITH WHAT POWER, NO, WITH WHAT TRICK DID YOU BRING THIS RAIN?
I DID NOT MAKE IT RAIN. IT MUST HAVE RAINED ON ITS OWN.
NO, YOU MUST HAVE USED SOME POWER. I'M SURE OF IT.
HOW ELSE COULD THE TIMING BE SO PERFECT?

YOU AND YOUR POWERS... EVEN IF YOU DON'T USE ANY TRICKS, IT RAINS WHEN IT RAINS, AND FIRES STOP BURNING EVENTUALLY.

THAT'S HOW NATURE WORKS. THE THING WILL COME TO PASS, AND ISN'T THAT GOOD ENOUGH?

HUMANS THINK TO MAKE THINGS HAPPEN – THAT'S DESIRE. LEAVE NATURE ALONE AND IT WILL CHANGE ON ITS OWN.

STOPPING THAT IS BEYOND THE POWER OF MEN!

DAMN MONK, DON'T TALK LIKE YOU'VE GOT IT ALL FIGURED OUT!

WHAT ABOUT ME? THIS ANANDA!

YOU THINK A GUY LIKE ME COMING INTO THE WORLD IS THE WORK OF NATURE TOO?

IN-DEED IT IS.

YOU ARE NOT A DEMON-CHILD, OR ANY SUCH THING. YOU WERE BORN ACCORDING TO NATURE AND GREW UP LIKEWISE. YOU ARE AN ORDINARY HUMAN BEING.

IT'S NOT TRUE

YOU DON'T GET IT AT ALL. I'VE...

KILLED SO MANY! LEAVE ME ALONE AND I'LL KILL MORE!

ANANDA

EVERYTHING IN THIS WORLD IS CONNECTED, ONE TO ANOTHER, IN SOME WAY.

ALL LIFE LONG. YOU WILL HAVE TIES WITH MANY THINGS AS YOU LIVE.

SINCE THAT IS TRUE, WHY NOT...

LEAVE THINGS TO NATURE ?

WHEN YOU FEEL LIKE KILLING A MAN,

YOU SHOULD SIMPLY TELL YOURSELF,

HE WILL DIE ONE DAY, NATURALLY.

WHAT'S IMPORTANT IS THAT YOU YOURSELF LIVE RIGHTLY. DO YOU SEE?

...BUDDHA, IF I...

IF I DO THAT, WILL I BE A DECENT MAN?

MAKE ME YOUR DISCIPLE

PLEASE !!

I WANT TO HEAR MORE!!

WHO TAUGHT YOU THIS WAY OF THINKING ?

I AWOKE TO IT ON MY OWN

ONE DAY... BY A RIVER...

A...A
A...

A...AN...
AN...
DA...!!

LATA

A
NAN
DA
!!

LATA...
YOUR
VOICE
!!

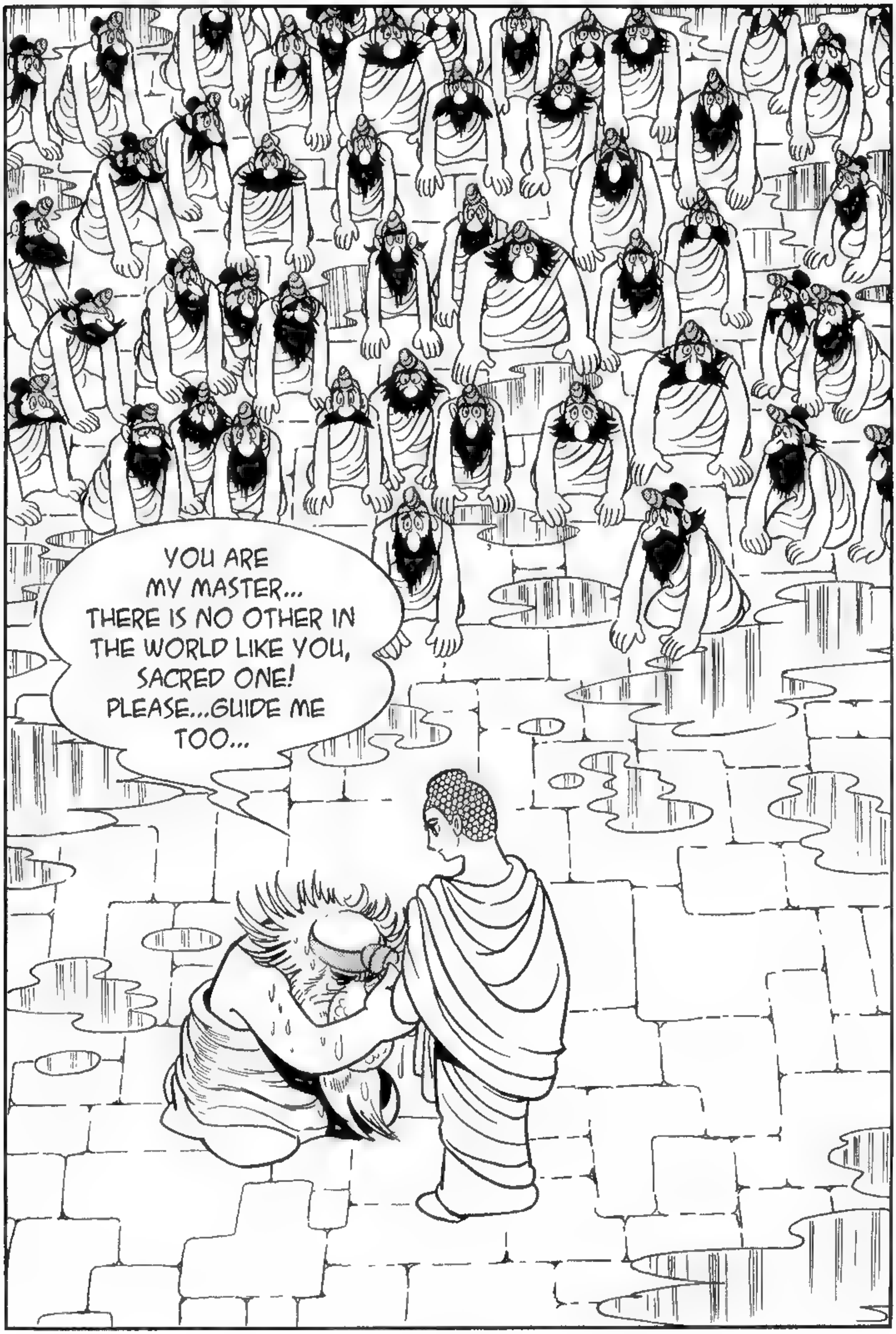
LATAA

WHAT A MIRACLE ...

YES

LATA! YOU REALLY SAID THAT? YOU CAN TALK NOW?

A... NAN... DA... I... CAN!


YOU ARE MY MASTER... THERE IS NO OTHER IN THE WORLD LIKE YOU, SACRED ONE! PLEASE...GUIDE ME TOO...

LISTEN, ALL.

I SHALL FOLLOW THAT MAN AND LEAVE THIS SHRINE.

IF YOU WOULD WALK WITH ME STILL, REVERE HIM AS YOUR NEW MASTER!

ANY WHO ARE RELUCTANT MAY PART FREELY AND GO THEIR OWN WAYS.

WE'D LIKE TO COME WITH YOU, SIR.

LET US SHAVE OUR HEADS THEN.

PUT THE HAIR IN THIS SACK.

KRID

KRID

MASTER, WE OFFER THIS TOKEN OF OUR ALLEGIANCE.

LET US ENTRUST IT TO THE FLOW OF THE NIRANJANA, FAR TO THE WEST OF HERE.

DON'T CATCH A COLD BECAUSE OF YOUR SHAVED HEADS.

NOW THEN, LET'S GO.

HE MAY NOT BE OUR MASTER ANYMORE, BUT KASSAPA SURE IS A GREAT MAN. HE COULD GIVE UP EVERYTHING FOR THE SAKE OF WISDOM.

OUR MASTER HAS GAINED FIVE HUNDRED DISCIPLES AT ONCE. IMPRESSIVE.

I JUST HOPE WE DON'T GO HUNGRY ...

'TIS ONLY THE BEGINNING. HE'LL HAVE TENS OF THOUSANDS OF FOLLOWERS.

DHEPA, SIR

MY TWO BROTHERS LIVE BY THE NIRANJANA RIVER. THEY ARE BOTH FIRE PRIESTS LIKE I USED TO BE AND HAVE ABOUT FIVE HUNDRED DISCIPLES.

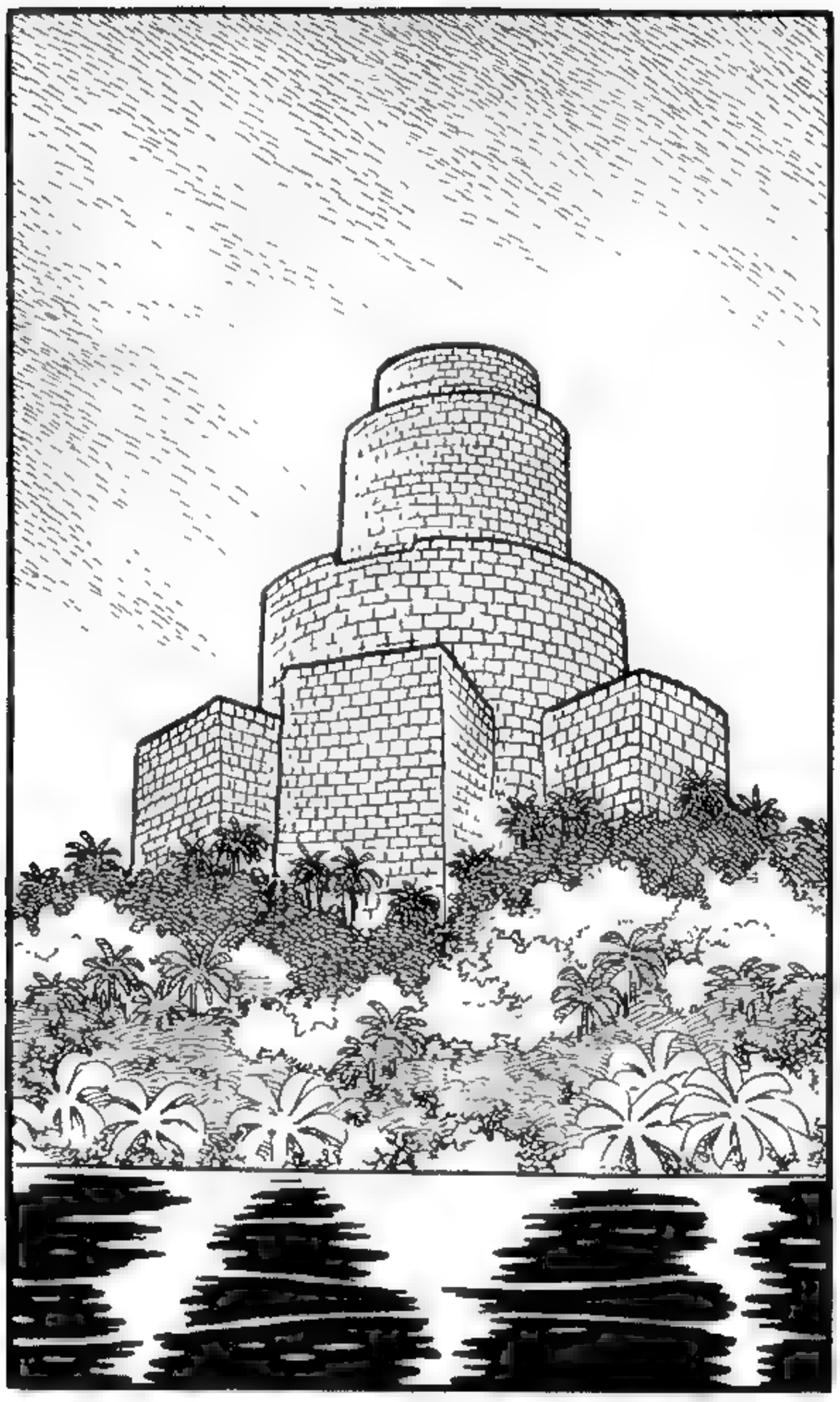
THOSE TWO, I WOULD LIKE TO SEE CONVERTED, SO THEY MAY JOIN OUR MASTER.

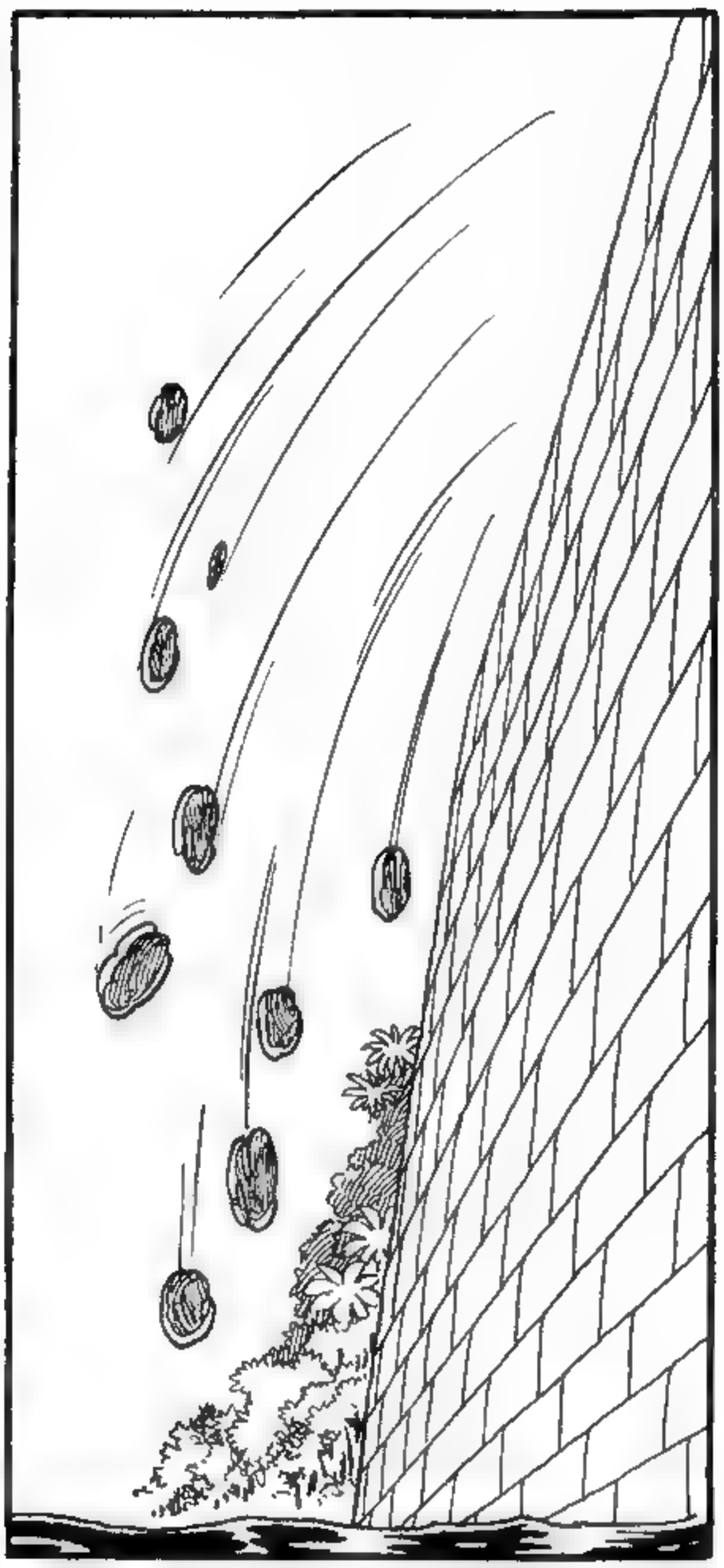
BUT WILL THEY AGREE TO IT ?

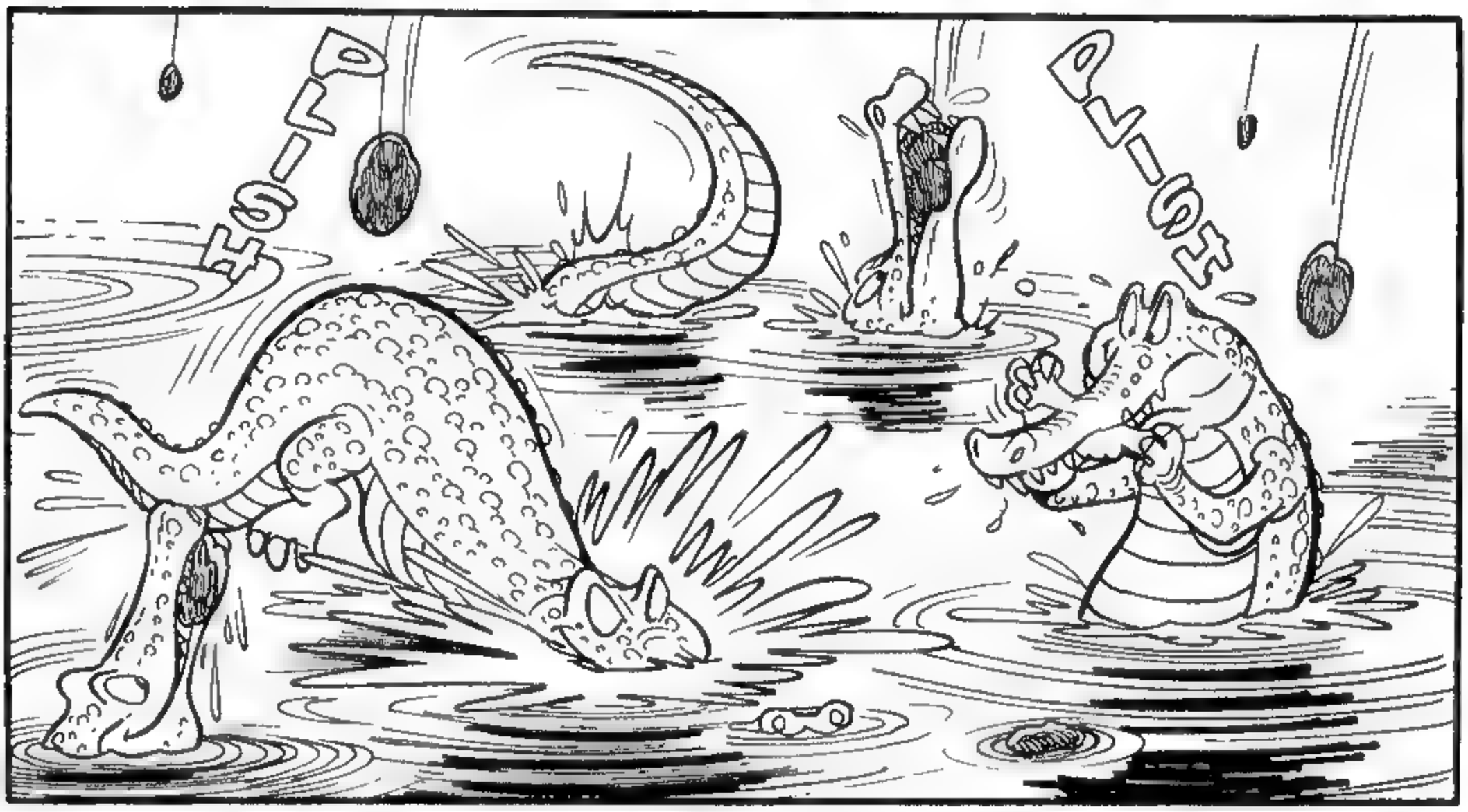
I'LL SEE THAT THEY DO.

CHAPTER SEVEN

River of Crocs







PLISH PLISH

HA HA HA... EAT ALL YOU WANT, YOU HUNGRY MAN-EATERS.

A SUSPICIOUS MAN IS COMING DOWN THE RIVER, SIR!

WHAT ?

HE-Y !!

LIFT ME OUT OF HERE!

IF WE HADN'T FED THE CROCS ALREADY, THEY'D HAVE DEVOURED YOU DOWN TO YOUR BARE BONES.

WHO ARE YOU? WHERE ARE YOU FROM?

MY NAME'S AHIMSA ...

I'VE COME FLEEING FROM UPSTREAM

...AFTER MASTER KASSAPA'S PLACE WAS BURNT TO THE GROUND.

KASSAPA? DO YOU MEAN URUVELA KASSAPA?

YUP

THERE WAS A FIRE?

YEAH, AN ARSON.

WHO SET THE FIRE? WHAT'S BECOME OF URUVELA KASSAPA? I WANT ALL THE DETAILS.

WELL, BASICALLY IT'S ALL BECAUSE OF THIS NO-GOOD MONK BUDDHA.

HE DEFEATED MASTER KASSAPA, WHO THEN BECAME ONE OF BUDDHA'S FOLLOWERS ALONG WITH A HOST OF HIS DISCIPLES.

FOLLOWER?

"YOU ARE MY MASTER," HE SAID.

HE WOULD NEVER SAY THAT!

OW... DON'T TAKE IT OUT ON ME!

I AM URUVELA KASSAPA'S YOUNGER BROTHER, NADI KASSAPA.

WHAT?

I KNOW HIM WELL. HE WOULD NEVER GIVE UP HIS WAY AND FOLLOW SOMEONE ELSE'S TEACHINGS!

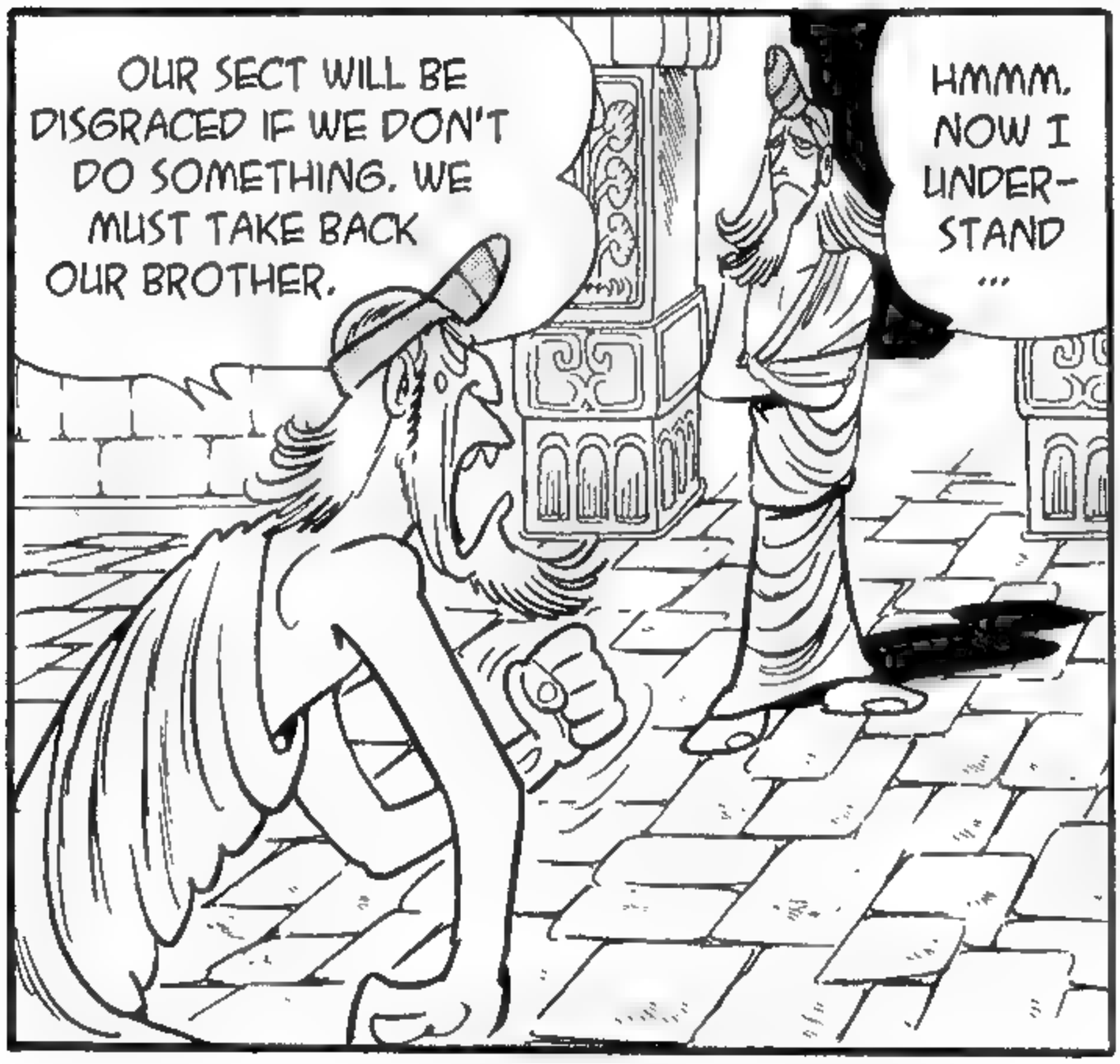
...BUT HE REALLY DID BECOME BUDDHA'S DISCIPLE.

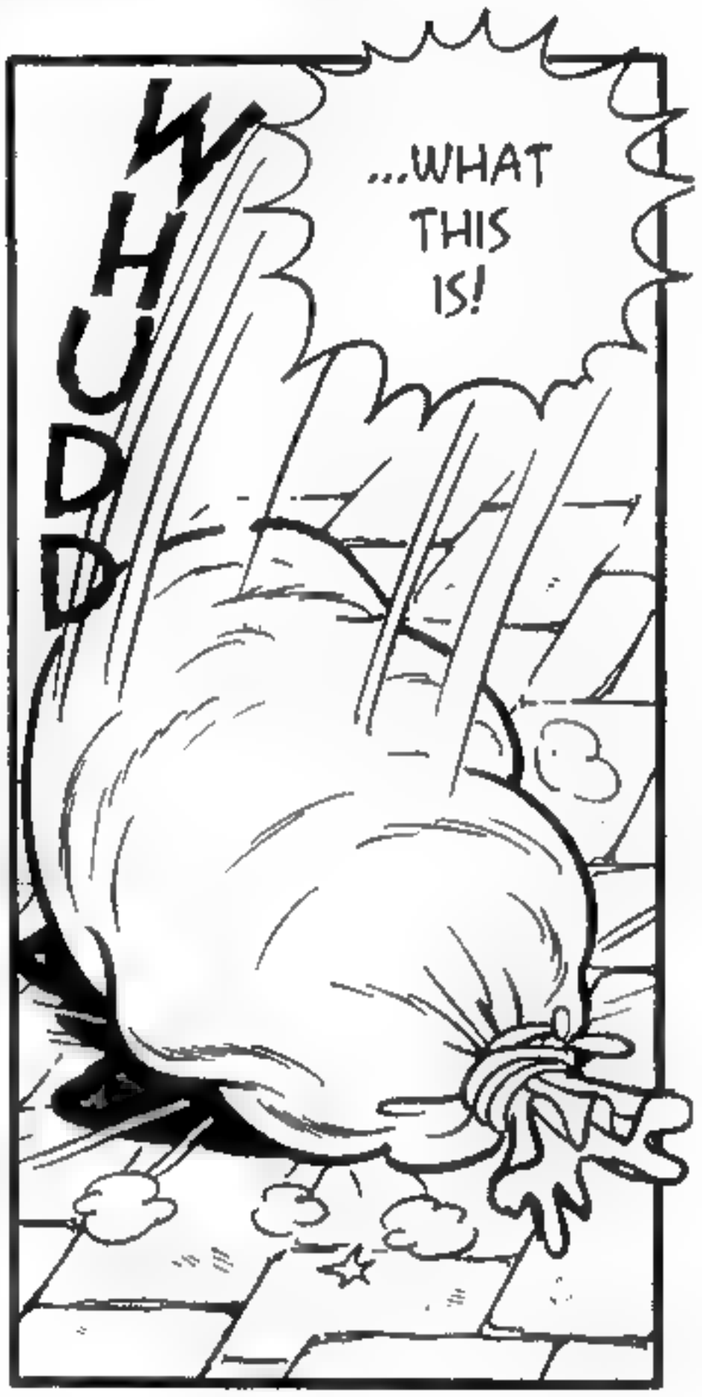
IF THAT'S TRUE, THIS MAN MUST HAVE PUT A SPELL ON MY BROTHER.

THIS IS SERIOUS. GO TO GAYA AND BRING HIM OVER HERE AT ONCE!

WHAT IS THE MATTER, DEAR ELDER BROTHER?

YOU WOULD NOT BELIEVE IT, GAYA
...BUT THIS HAPPENED AND THAT HAPPENED! ETCETERA ETCETERA!! THERE YOU HAVE IT...


OUR SECT WILL BE DISGRACED IF WE DON'T DO SOMETHING. WE MUST TAKE BACK OUR BROTHER.
HMMM. NOW I UNDER-STAND ...


WHUDD
...WHAT THIS IS!

IT WASHED UP ON THE SHORE BY MY TEMPLE LAST NIGHT.

SEEING HOW IT WAS FILLED WITH HAIR, I WONDERED WHAT STRANGE CHARM IT COULD BE...

HAIR FROM SEVERAL HUNDRED PEOPLE...

AND HERE'S OUR BROTHER'S WHITE HAIR!!

SO THE STORY MUST BE TRUE.

WHAT SHALL WE DO ABOUT THIS BUDDHA?

WE WILL PUNISH HIM OF COURSE.

WE'LL RESCUE OUR BROTHER FIRST. THEN WE'LL TOSS BUDDHA TO THESE CROCODILES.

HE'S TRYING TO BREAK UP OUR SECT. WE MUST MAKE HIM SERVE AS AN EXAMPLE. HA HA HA...

GAYA, YOU ARE CLEVER...

YOU COULD TEACH AT HARVARD.

HA HA HA
HA HA HA
HA HA HA

HA HA
HA HA

DID YOU COME UP WITH A PLAN?

NO NEED TO WORRY. URUVELA KASSAPA WILL BE RESTORED AS LEADER OF HIS SECT.

HERE'S LUNCH AND A QUARTER. OFF WITH YOU.

I DIDN'T COME HERE FOR A MACDONALD'S HAMBURGER!

YOU HAVE NO USE FOR BUDDHA. HAND HIM OVER TO ME WHEN YOU CATCH HIM. I WANT TO DEAL WITH THAT MONK.

NO, THAT WILL NOT DO ...

HE MUST BE PUNISHED BY OUR SECT... HE WILL BE A SACRIFICE TO THE CROCS.

I WANT TO FLOG HIM TO DEATH, WITH MY OWN HANDS! YOU'VE GOTTA GIVE HIM TO ME!

HM, HAVE I SEEN YOUR FACE

ON TV? ...AREN'T YOU A WANTED MAN?

HA HA HA

YOU'RE THE SERIAL KILLER WHO CHOPPED OFF YOUR VICTIMS' PINKIES! AM I MISTAKEN?

!

I ADVISE YOU TO LEAVE BEFORE IT GETS DARK, UNLESS YOU WANT TO BE THE CROCS' HORS D'OEUVRE!

GET RID OF THIS MAN!

YOU DIRTY MONKS !!

DAMN... I'M NOT GIVING UP SO EASY.

I'LL BE THE ONE TO KILL BUDDHA !

URRGH!!

A...AH...
URR...
UNGH

EICH
EICH
EICH

OH!!
HE...
HEL
HELP...

HEL-P...M-ME...!!

FORGIVE M-ME... PLE... PLEASE!!

ARRGH

OH

OH !!

HUH

IT'S YOU...

PHEW, I HAD THAT DREAM AGAIN.

EVERYONE I'VE KILLED COMES BACK AND TEARS ME APART.

I'VE HAD IT EVERY NIGHT SINCE I STARTED FOLLOWING BUDDHA.

ZZZZ

"GRIND"

SHNOR

AT THIS RATE, I'LL GO CRAZY AND DIE.

TELL ME, WHY SHOULD I FEEL SO MISERABLE ...

WHEN I'M TRYING TO MEND MY WAYS?

OF COURSE I REGRET WHAT I USED TO BE. ALL THE THINGS I DID...

BUT DO I HAVE TO SUFFER EVERY DAY FOR IT ?

IF THIS IS MY NEW LIFE...

I'D RATHER GO BACK TO BEING A BANDIT!!

AT LEAST I DIDN'T FEEL SO TORN UP THEN.

I WISH I HAD SOMETHING THAT WOULD GIVE ME A NIGHT OF DREAMLESS SLEEP.

I-IN THE RIV... RIVER.
PLANT...

YOU'RE SAYING THERE'S AN HERB?
WE DRY... POWDER... YOU DRINK. SLEEP WELL.

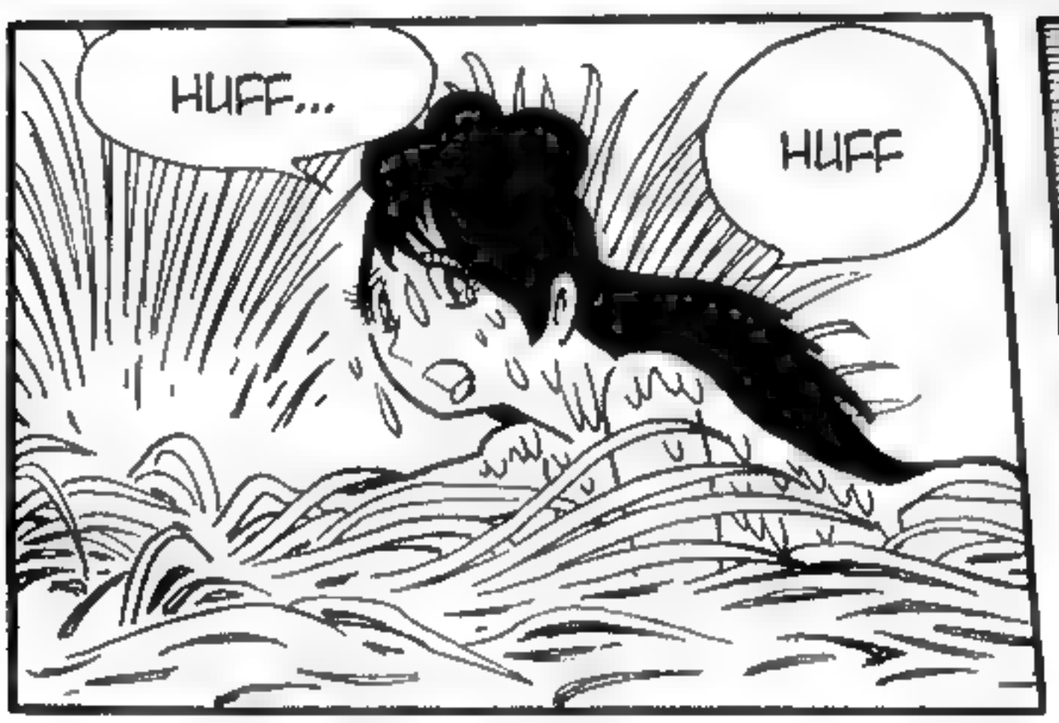
LATA KNOWS.
...I GO GET.

PLISH
PLISH

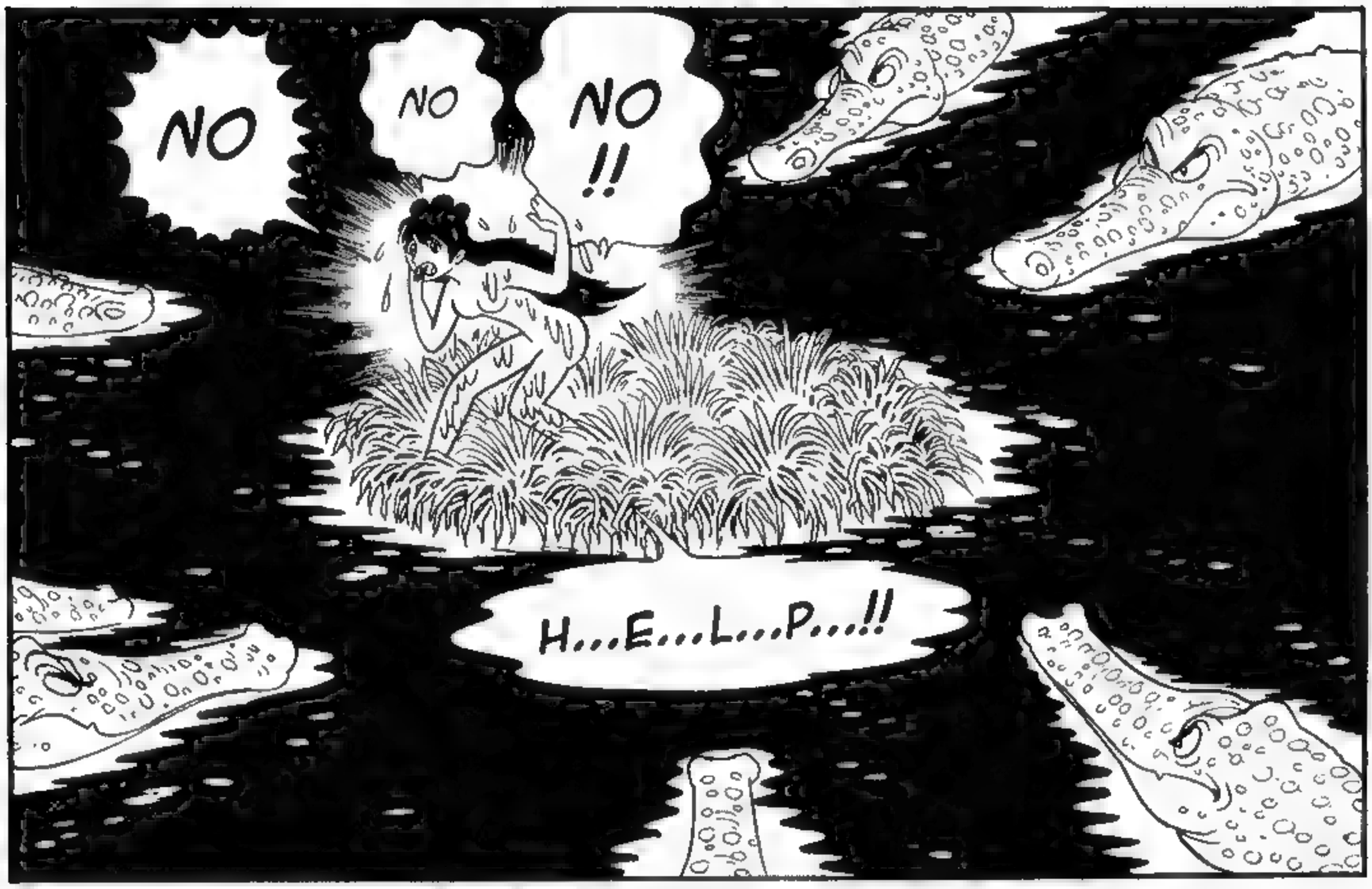
C-
CROCO...

AIEEE!

AIEEE


HUFF...
HUFF

AH


NO
NO
NO
!!
H...E...L...P...!!

H...E...L...P...

LATA!!

CROCO-
DILES...
NO!!

LATA,
I'M
COMING!

LET GO
OF ME,
DAMN
YOU ALL!

IT'S TOO
DANGEROUS.
THEY'LL
DEVOUR
YOU TOO.

IT'S
AWFUL,
BUT
IT'S TOO
LATE.

THE CROCS HERE
ARE VICIOUS.
THEY SWIM IN
SWARMS TOO.

WHY
DIDN'T
YOU
TELL ME
SOONER?
AND
LATA!

LET
ME GET
THROUGH.
I'LL GO.

BUDDHA!!

I'LL TRY TO REASON WITH THEM.

YOU AND YOUR COMIC-BOOK BLUFFS...

LET ME TAKE CARE OF THIS, ANANDA!

THEY WILL EAT YOU TOO, SIR.

THEY MIGHT, IF I FAIL TO APPEASE THEM...

AT THE VERY LEAST I CAN DRAW THE CROCODILES AWAY FROM HER SO SHE WILL BE SAFE.

IT WON'T WORK!

YOU DON'T SPEAK CROCODILE, DO YOU? HOW DO YOU SAY "STOP" IN CROCODILE?

SHE BETTER COME BACK ALIVE!

BUDDHA!

CALM DOWN, ALL OF YOU !!

LET US LEAVE THIS TO BUDDHA.

HAVE FAITH. HE IS NOT AN ORDINARY MAN. WE SHALL WATCH FROM HERE.

I DON'T... WANT TO DIE! PLEASE DON'T... EAT ME!

PLISH

PLISH

PLISH

LATA

LATA!!
...UN-
BELIEVABLE
...

CROCS
WENT
AWAY

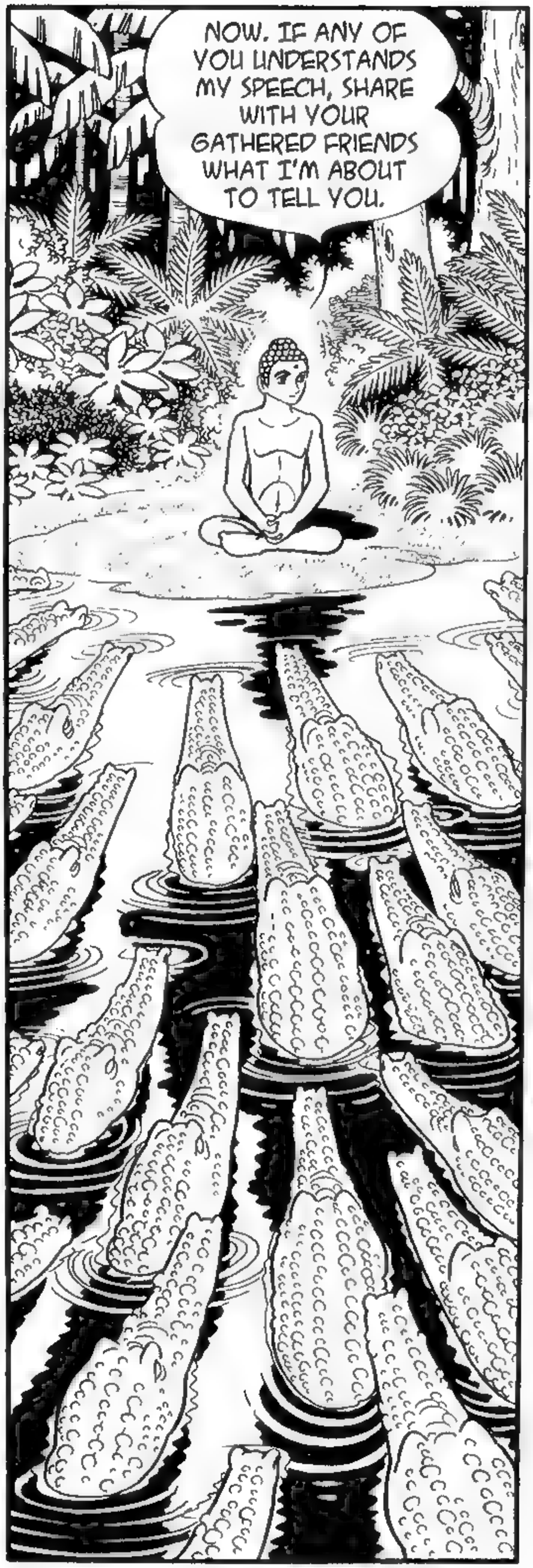
LOO-K! EVERY SINGLE ONE OF THEM IS AFTER BUDDHA.

THEY'RE GOING DOWN-STREAM.

HE'S LEADING THEM ON ...

GREETINGS, CROCODILES ...

SLAV ME LATER. FIRST, LISTEN.
THIS WAY.
HERE IS FINE.


NOW. IF ANY OF YOU UNDERSTANDS MY SPEECH, SHARE WITH YOUR GATHERED FRIENDS WHAT I'M ABOUT TO TELL YOU.

IT PAINS ME TO SEE YOUR PATE, BROTHER!

URUVELA KASSAPA, THE FAMED MASTER...

TAKING OFF WITH 500 FOLLOWERS, HEADS SHAVEN ALL, AND DISSOLVING HIS SECT... WHAT COULD BE MORE DISGRACEFUL?

NADI, GAYA. I BECAME BUDDHA'S DISCIPLE BECAUSE...

HIS TEACHINGS MOVED ME VERY DEEPLY.

I WORSHIPPED FIRE AND SPOKE ALWAYS OF SCIENCE, AND TECHNOLOGY, IN THE MOST EXALTED TERMS. YET AFTER MEETING BUDDHA...

I COULDN'T BUT SEE HOW PETTY AND MISERABLE MY THINKING HAD BEEN.

WE WERE WRONG. I'D LIKE YOU TWO TO MEET BUDDHA, TOO.

I WAS AFRAID YOU'D TALK IN SUCH A WAY.

HOW SAD !

GAYA AND I HAVE BEEN DISCUSSING HOW WE...

...MIGHT BRING YOU BACK INTO OUR FOLD, BROTHER.

WHAT NOW ?!

MY MASTER IS BUDDHA !!

I WILL NEVER RETURN TO A SECT THAT WORSHIPS FIRE !!

HMM, THE POISON SEEMS TO BE TAKING EFFECT...

SO ABOUT THIS BUDDHA ...

...I HEARD HE'S SUPPOSED TO HAVE PSYCHIC POWERS. AS YOU KNOW, WE KEEP CROCS ON THE LOOSE AT THE FOOT OF THIS TOWER...

IF HE LEAPT INTO THEIR MIDST, WOULD HIS POWERS KEEP HIM FROM BEING TORN TO PIECES?

IF WE SEE FOR OURSELVES SUCH A MIRACLE...

WE'LL CONSIDER FOLLOW-ING HIM.

ANY-THING THE MATTER, BROTH-ER?

WELL... LAST NIGHT, A LITTLE WAYS UP THIS RIVER...

DOZENS OF CROCODILES ATTACKED BUDDHA, WHO'D WADED INTO THE RIVER...

V-YES, AND THEN ?

HE SWAM DOWN-STREAM... AND HASN'T RETURNED SINCE.

HE SWAM DOWNSTREAM CHASED BY CROCS?

HA HA HA HA HO HO OH-

THEN HE ISN'T COMING BACK, EVER.

WELL, MAYBE JUST HIS BONES.

BUDDHA IS NOT YOUR USUAL HUMAN. I'M SURE HE'LL RETURN!

HE MIGHT HAVE AL-READY, IN FACT.

PLEASE CONSIDER WHAT I SAID.

BROTHER !!

HA HA HA HA HO HO OH-

WORK

HAS BUDDHA COME BACK YET?
NO SIR
THE RUMOR IS THAT THE CROCODILES HAVE DEVOURED HIM. EVERYONE IS FEELING RESTLESS.
ANANDA'S RUN OFF WITH THAT WOMAN.
HE RAN AWAY?!

WHY...
RUN AWAY...
ANANDA...

WHY
WASTE TIME
WITH MONKS
UNLESS IT'S
BUDDHA?

BUT BUDDHA...
MIGHT
COME BACK...

OF COURSE
HE'S BEEN EATEN!!
I KNOW HE SAVED
YOUR LIFE...
BUT ME...

...I'VE HAD THOSE
NIGHTMARES
EVER SINCE
I JOINED HIM...

I'D CROAK
IF I STAYED
WITH HIM.

WHAT... DO WE DO FROM NOW?

WELL... I'LL JUST GO BACK TO BEING A BANDIT.

THAT'S WHAT I'M CUT OUT FOR!

I'VE KILLED DOZENS OF PEOPLE, OKAY?

IT'S TOO LATE FOR ME TO BECOME A MONK.

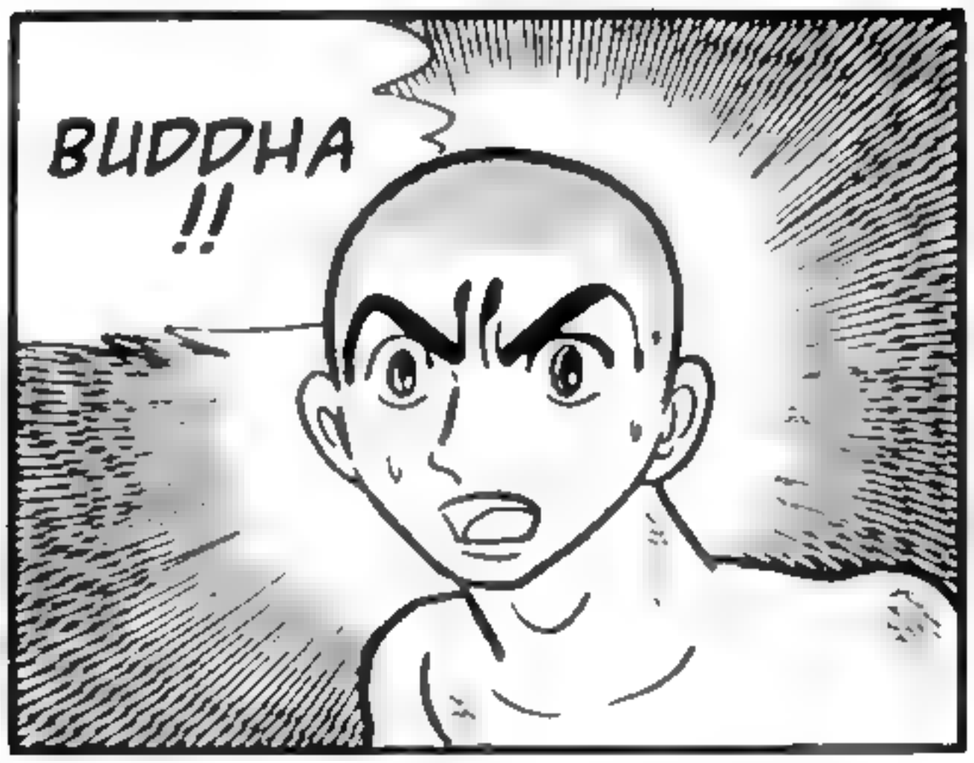
BUT

SHH

SOME-ONE'S HERE.

QUIET

FOLLOW ME... QUIETLY NOW.


BUDDHA
!!

AH, I KNEW I'D GET
A CHANCE TO DEAL
WITH YOU
ONE ON ONE
LIKE THIS. HEH...

I WENT DOWNSTREAM FIRST, BUT THEN I TURNED BACK...

...AND WHAT DO I SEE BUT YOU HANGIN' OUT WITH CROCS! PERFECT TIMING!

SO I GRABBED YOU AND DRAGGED YOU OVER HERE.

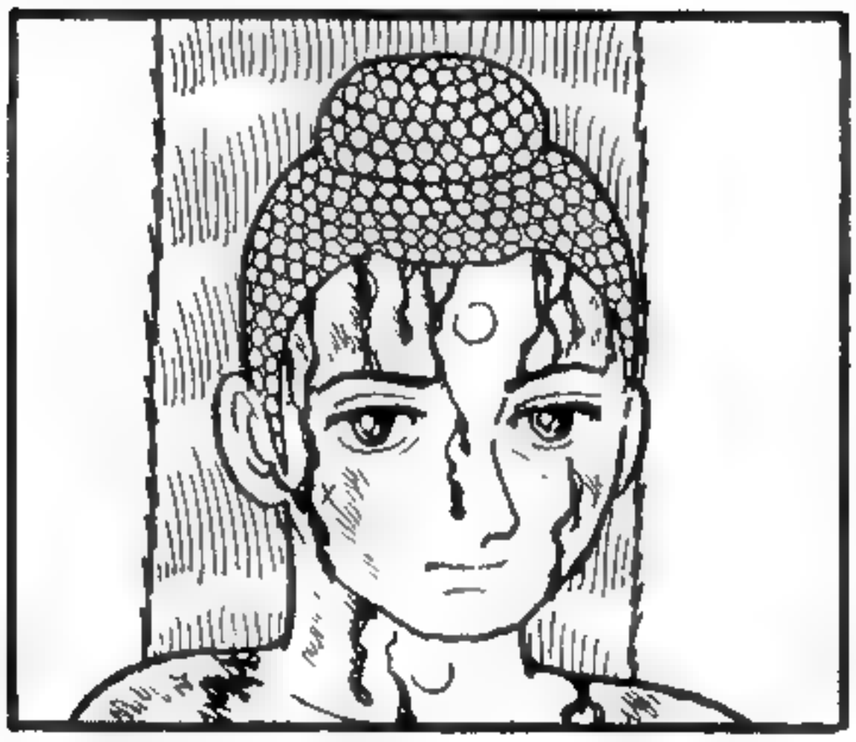
I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU WERE PREACHING TO CROCS...

...BUT NOTHING SICKENS ME MORE THAN THAT SORT OF PSEUDO-SAINTLY POSING.

EH? WHY DON'T YOU SAY SOMETHING? HOW 'BOUT, "HAVE MERCY!"

OR TRY, "SPARE MY LIFE AT LEAST!" ...

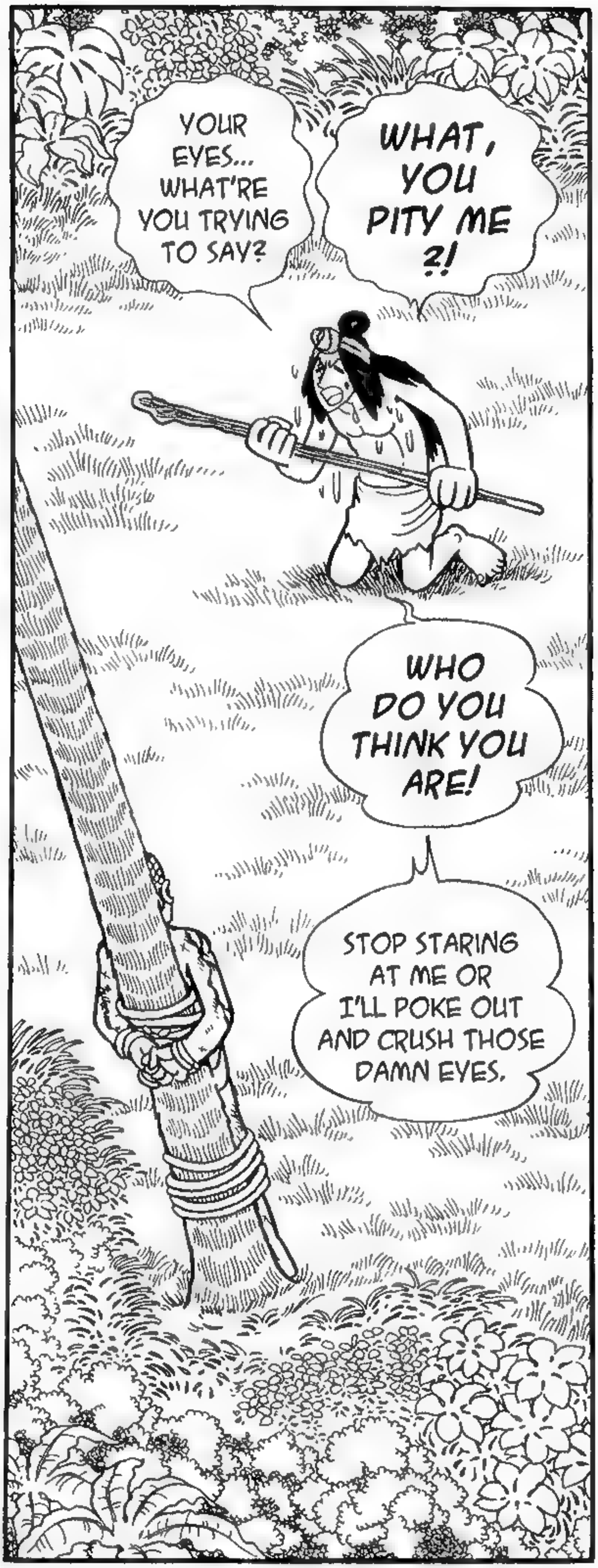
AREN'T YOU GONNA BEG? HUH?



WHAT'S THAT LOOK ?

WHY DO YOU LOOK AT ME LIKE THAT

DON'T STARE AT ME... STOP IT.
CUT IT OUT!!


YOUR EYES... WHAT'RE YOU TRYING TO SAY?
WHAT, YOU PITY ME ?!
WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE!
STOP STARING AT ME OR I'LL POKE OUT AND CRUSH THOSE DAMN EYES.

TAKE THIS !!

THUNK

WHOSE EYES WILL WE CRUSH NOW, AHIMSA?

ANANDA... THAT'S YOUR VOICE

TOUCH BUDDHA AGAIN AND I'LL KILL YOU!!

BUDDHA, YOU'RE OK NOW.

GET OUTTA MY WAY, YOU!

ANANDA...!

KAAA

KNACK

STOP THIS, ANANDA.

BUT WHY ...?

STOP IT. I WAS CONVER-SING WITH THAT MAN.

WE NEED TO CONTINUE OUR TALK. I DON'T THINK HE WAS DONE YET.

W-WHAT ARE YOU SAYING? HE'S TIED YOU UP, BEATEN YOU TO A PULP! WHAT TALK?!

IN ANY CASE, YOU MUSTN'T INTERFERE.

BUT THIS GUY WILL KILL YOU...

WHAT THIS MAN MIGHT DO IS NOT YOUR BUSINESS.

YOU HEARD HIM! IT'S NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS, ANANDA. BUTT OUT!

...

HEH
HEH
HEH

SNIK

POOP

HEH
HEH
HEH

DON'T THINK IT WAS OUT OF MERCY I CUT YOUR HANDS LOOSE.

MONK, MY NICKNAME IS ANGULIMALA. DO YOU KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS? "NECKLACE OF FINGERS," IT MEANS.

I'VE KILLED SCORES OF PEOPLE AND CUT OFF THEIR FINGERS. YUP, I'M A SERIAL KILLER! SEE, THIS IS THE KNIFE THAT TASTED THE BLOOD OF ALL THOSE FINGERS...

A...

I WANNA CHOP OFF ALL TEN OF THEM.

YOU KNOW WHAT?

THAT'S WHAT I'LL DO FIRST.

I WANT YOUR FIN-GERS.

AND ONCE I CHOP OFF ALL OF THEM...

I'M GONNA SHOVE THEM INTO YOUR MOUTH! YOU'RE GONNA EAT YOUR FINGERS!

AND THAT WILL SATISFY YOU?

FINE... CUT THEM OFF.

NAH, THAT'S ONLY THE BEGINNING. AT THE END YOU'RE GONNA DIE. EXCEPT...

...YOU'LL BEG FOR YOUR LIFE ALONG THE WAY. WHEN YOU DO, I LET YOU GO.

...

IS HE NUTS?

WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?

DON'T POINT AT ME LIKE THAT!!

OPEN UP YOUR HANDS

LIKE THIS ?

WHAT IS THE MATTER, AHIMSA?

SHUT UP, BASTARD. YOU TRIED TO HYPNOTIZE ME!!

THAT'S IT. I'LL CHOP OFF YOUR ARMS TOO.

STOP IT!!

STOP... POINTING...

...YOUR FINGERS AT ME !

AHH!!

ARRGH

DAMMIT!

PLEASE, STOP

DON'T...!

I-I'M IN PAIN!

BASTARD

I'M GONNA KILL YOU!

I-IT'S... RUSTED...

TURNED BLUE! ALL OF A SUDDEN...

NOW

URR... UGH...

AHIMSA, YOU AND I WERE ABOUT TO HAVE A GOOD TALK...

T-TALK?... GIVE ME A BREAK... WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO TELL ME?

NOTHING. YOU SHALL TALK TO ME, SAYING ALL THAT YOU WANT TO SAY. YOUR FEELINGS ...

VENT THEM ALL ON ME.

AND THEN WHAT? HEY, WHAT IS THIS, COUNSELING?

A WASTE OF TIME... I'M NOT IN THE MOOD.

ONCE YOU ARE DONE, YOU WILL DIE.

HAH? I'LL DIE ?

HA HA HA

HEE HEE HOW AM I GOING TO DIE?

A TRAFFIC ACCIDENT? WILL I KILL MYSELF?

YOUR LIFE WILL END.

YOUR LIFE AS ANGULI-MALA.

AND THEN ...?

YOU THE SERIAL KILLER, YOU THE FINGER-CUTTING DEMON, YOU THE GUILT-RIDDEN BEING WHO SUFFERS FROM REMORSE, WILL VANISH FROM THIS WORLD.

YOU SHALL BE REBORN AS A DIFFERENT MAN. AND HE WILL SEEK A NEW PATH.

HAH!! HOW YOU TALK!

YOU... REALLY THINK I'M GONNA DO THAT? I DON'T SUFFER FROM ANY ...GUILT...

YES, YOU ARE SUFFERING!

BE BRAVE, AHIMSA!

DIE ONCE!

AND

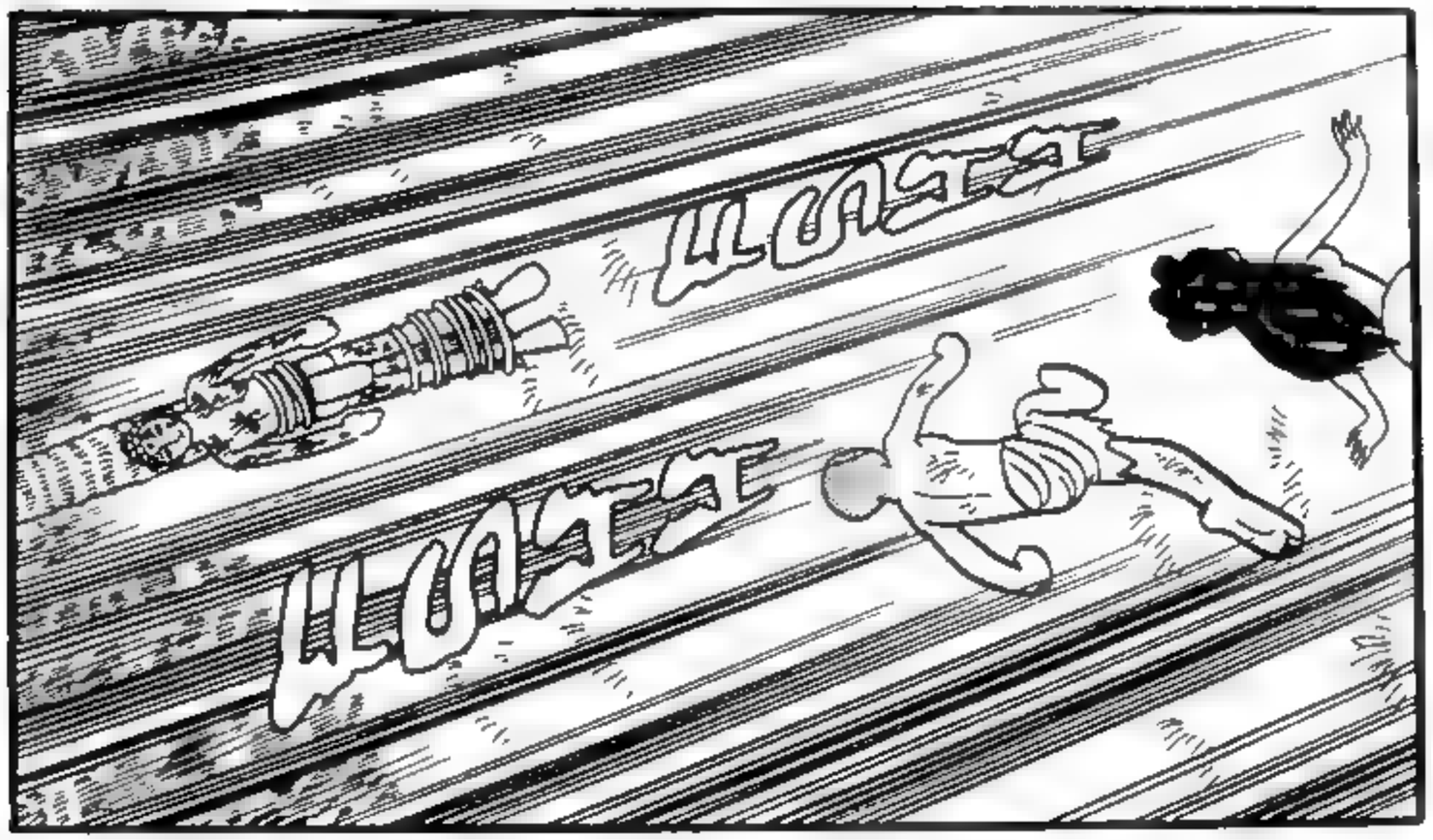
ESCAPE THAT SUFFERING.

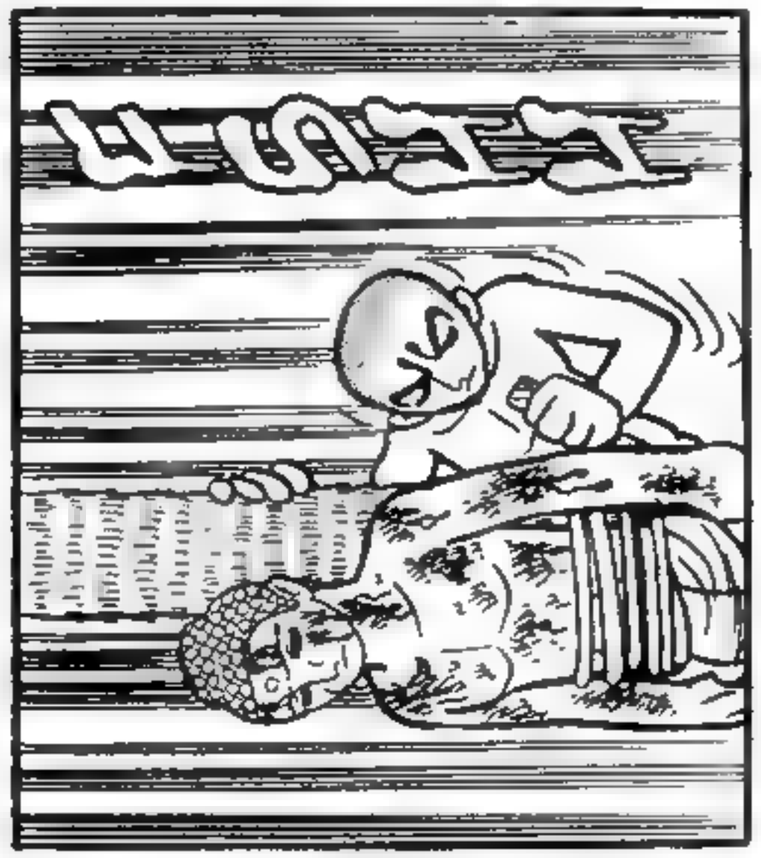
I'M NOT SUFFERING !!

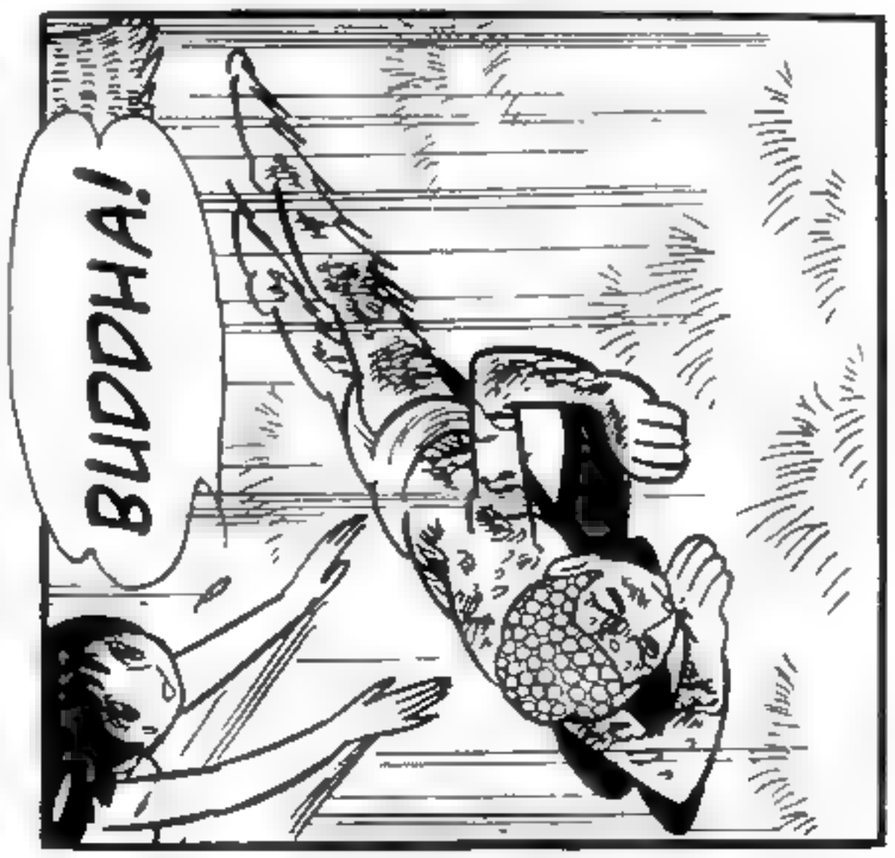
COURAGE, AHIMSA! BE REBORN AS A NEW MAN!

URRGH

AHHH!!!






BUDDHA!

TERRIBLE...! WE MUST GO BACK... SO THEY...TREAT YOUR WOUNDS...

NO... I AM ALL RIGHT.

I AM ONLY SORRY ...

...THAT I SIMPLY WASN'T UP TO IT. I FAILED...

AND AHIMSA LEFT US WITHOUT BEING REBORN.

BUDDHA... WHAT YOU SAID TO HIM. DOES IT HOLD TRUE FOR ME TOO?

'CAUSE I'M A MURDEROUS ROBBER TOO, THE DEVIL'S FORTUNE CHILD! DO YOU THINK A WRETCH LIKE ME...

...CAN BE REBORN INTO A NEW LIFE?

ANANDA, I KNOW WHY YOU SHOWED UP HERE

ALL OF A SUD-DEN.

YOU WERE RUNNING AWAY FROM US BECAUSE YOU WERE SUFFERING.

BINGO

IT'S JUST AS YOU SAY. THERE'S NO WAY I CAN BECOME YOUR DISCIPLE.

THEN WHY DID YOU TRY TO SAVE ME

AND FIGHT AHIMSA ?

HMM

YOU'VE ALREADY DIED...

AND BEEN REBORN.

YOU REALLY THINK SO?

ANANDA... LET'S GO BACK...

YEAH... IF BUDDHA'S COMING BACK THEN SO AM I.

LOOK, ANANDA. THE RAIN HAS WASHED MY WOUNDS. I SHALL BE FINE.

I SWAM DOWNSTREAM. LET US RETURN UP THE RIVER.

BUDDHA, IT'S PROBABLY FLOODING OVER FROM THE SQUALL.

SEE? WE OUGHT TO RETURN THROUGH THE WOODS.

DO YOU KNOW THE WAY BACK?

DID YOU LEAVE ANY MARKS?

ONLY... RAN

THEN WE MUSTN'T GO INTO THE WOODS. IF WE LOSE OUR WAY, WE'LL NEVER MAKE IT BACK.

BUT THE RIVER'S FILLED WITH CROCS... HERE THEY ARE!

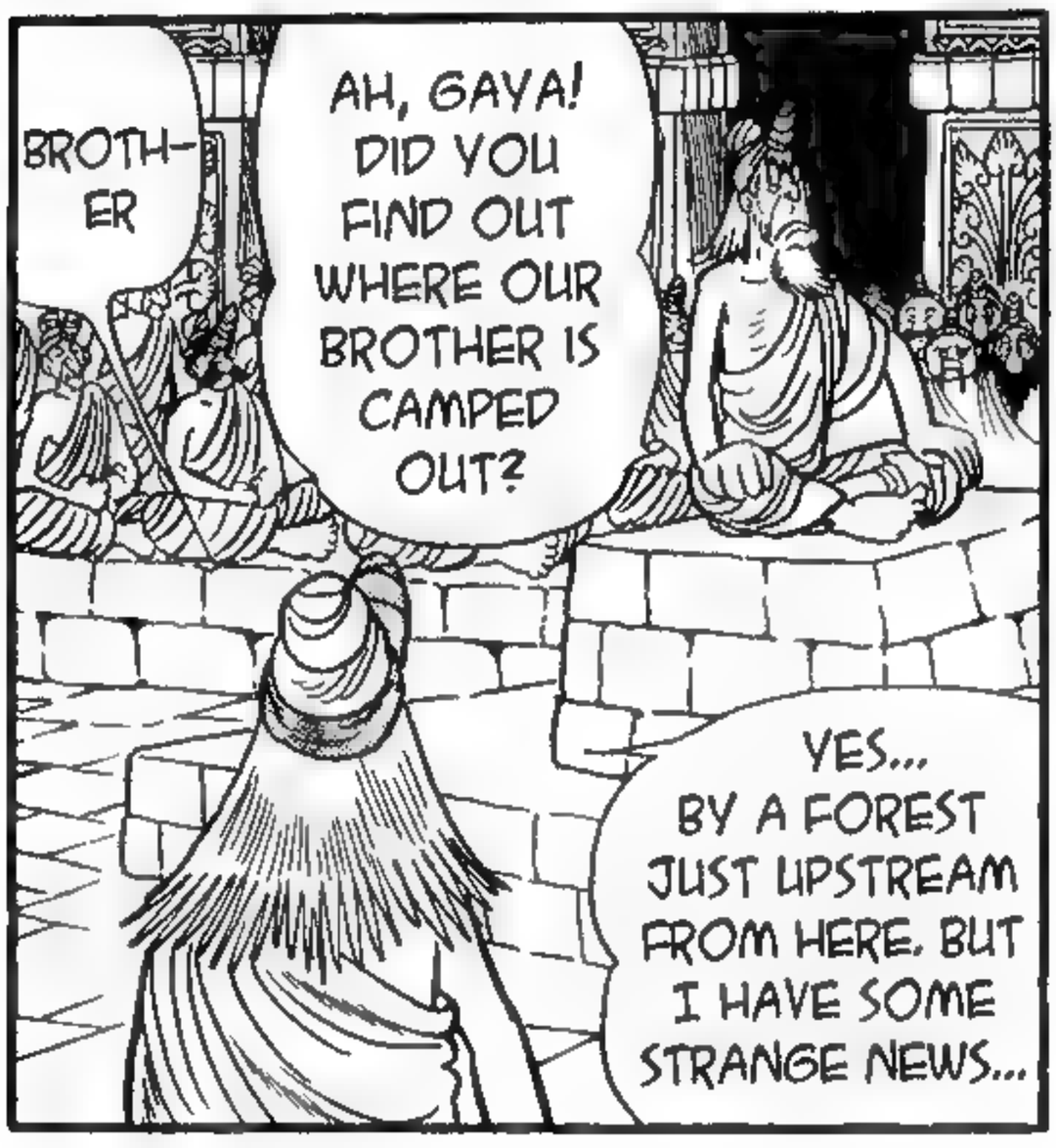
WATCH OUT, BUDDHA! THEY'RE THE ONES FROM LAST NIGHT!

DON'T WORRY. WE'VE BECOME FRIENDS.

FSSHH

FSSHH

FSSHH


BROTH-
ER
AH, GAYA! DID YOU FIND OUT WHERE OUR BROTHER IS CAMPED OUT?
YES... BY A FOREST JUST UPSTREAM FROM HERE. BUT I HAVE SOME STRANGE NEWS...

THE SQUALL MUST HAVE FORCED THEM DOWN-STREAM.

CROCODILES AREN'T SUCH WIMPS.

THEY COULDN'T ALL HAVE DRIFTED.

I'M BUSY LECTURING. DON'T BOTHER ME WITH SUCH TRIFLES, UNDER-STOOD?

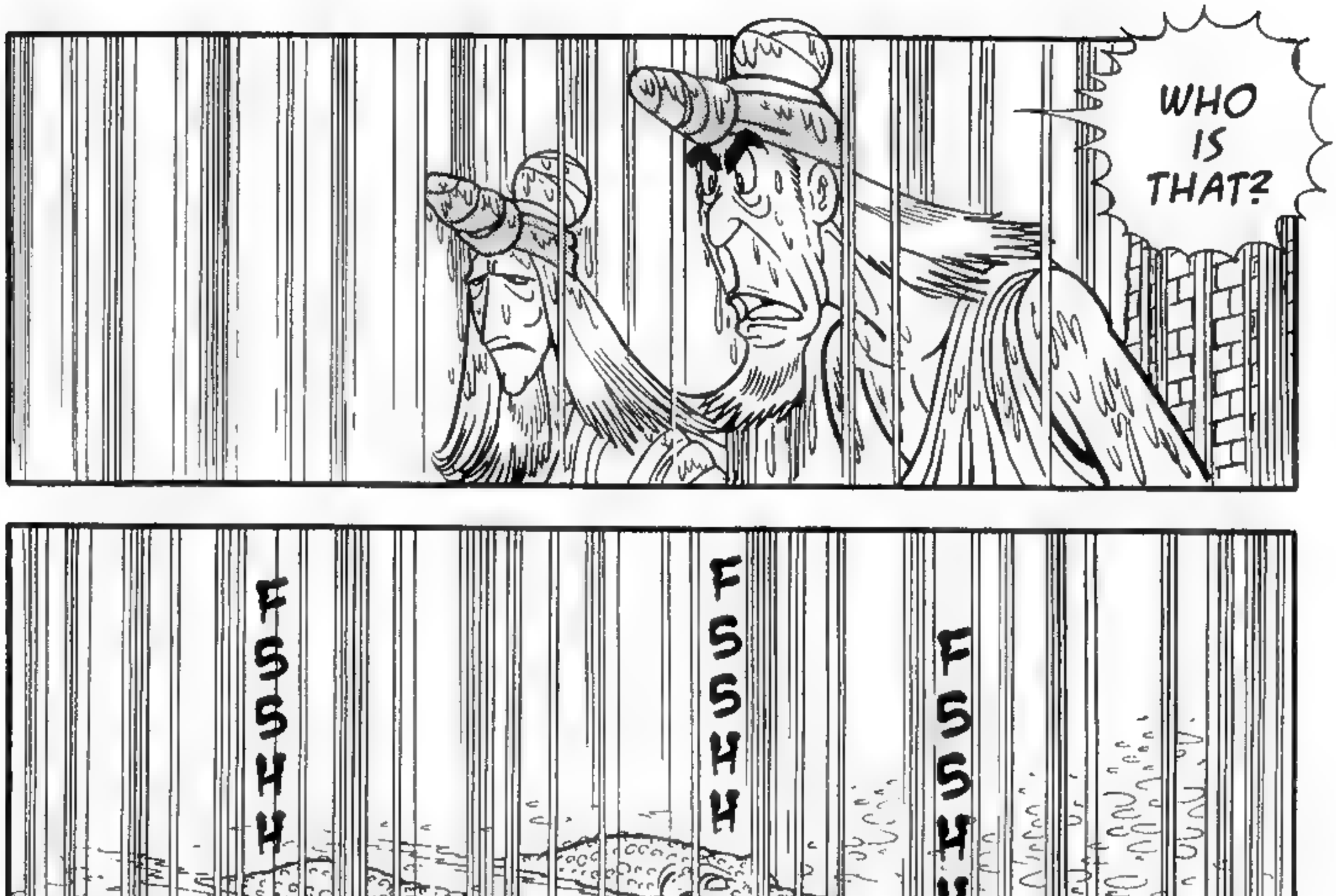
BROTHER! COME WITH ME!

YOU AGAIN, GAYA? WHAT IS YOUR PROBLEM?

WHAT?!

THE CROC-O-DILES!

AND SEE WHAT'S IN THE CENTER, BROTHER!


WHO IS THAT?
FSSHH
FSSHH
FSSHH

C-COULD THAT BE BUDDHA ?!

THIS CAN'T BE...

SIRS!

I AM SORRY, BUT COULD YOU LEND ME A BOAT? A YOUNG COUPLE HAS LOST THEIR WAY DOWNSTREAM, AND I MUST BRING THEM BACK TO OUR GROUP.

FIRST, TELL US! ...

HOW DID YOU MANAGE TO TAME THOSE CROCS ?!

I DIDN'T TAME THEM, THEY MERELY CARRIED ME.

SUCH THINGS HAPPEN IN COMICS FOR KIDS...

BUT THIS IS A SERIOUS STORY!!

BESIDES, I AM THE MASTER OF THOSE CROCODILES, AND THEY'RE FIERCE GUARDS!

IF THEY'RE HUNGRY THEY'LL EAT ANYTHING, HUMAN OR G.I. JOE!

YET YOU'VE COME RIDING ON THEIR BACKS!

THESE CROCODILES WERE GRACIOUS ENOUGH TO LISTEN TO WHAT I HAD TO SAY.

I TOLD THEM: I KNOW YOU NEED TO ATTACK AND DEVOUR CREATURES THAT ENTER THE RIVER, IT'S FOR YOUR OWN SURVIVAL.

YOU LIAR !!

BUT IF YOU TRY TO EAT ANY AND ALL LIVING THINGS THAT COME INTO THE RIVER...

THEN THEY'LL BE FRIGHTENED AND AVOID THE RIVER.

YOU'LL HAVE LITTLE TO EAT AND MAYBE EVEN STARVE TO DEATH.

THE WORLD WORKS BECAUSE WE HELP ONE ANOTHER. IF YOU SHOW MERCY TO SOMETHING, THEN IN TURN, SOMETHING ELSE WILL ASSIST YOU.

CONSIDER THE PLOVERS THAT CLEAN YOUR TEETH. WITHOUT THOSE BIRDS YOUR TEETH WOULD TURN GRIMY AND SOON ROT AWAY.

I SPOKE TO THEM OF SUCH THINGS...

THEY SEEMED TO APPROVE OF MY WORDS, AND TO TAKE THEM TO HEART.

LIES!!

HOW COULD THESE BEASTS UNDER-STAND ALL THAT?!

AH HA! YOU PUT A SPELL ON THEM!

THAT'S IT!! THAT'S WHY THEY HAVEN'T EATEN YOU!

THAT'S NOT WHY. WITH THE RIVER FLOODING, A LOT OF UPSTREAM FISH WERE FORCED DOWN OUR WAY.

A FEAST FOR THE CROCS.

THEY'RE SATED NOW AND DON'T POSE A THREAT. WE'VE BECOME FRIENDS.

WE'LL LEND YOU THE BOAT.

BROTH-ER!!

WE DON'T HAVE TO OFFER ANYTHING TO THAT GUY.

WE DON'T HAVE TO REFUSE HIM A BOAT EITHER. I'M NO MISER.

SO YOU ARE THE ONE KNOWN AS BUDDHA?

YES, I'M BUDDHA.

I HAD A FEELING YOU MIGHT BE.

MY ELDER BROTHER, URUVELA, TOLD ME ABOUT YOU.

YOU'VE MADE HIM YOUR DISCIPLE?

I WAS LISTENING CLOSELY TO YOUR STORY JUST NOW.

I SEE THAT YOU'RE QUITE LEARNED. AND, I MUST SAY, RATHER UNIQUE!

BROTH-ER

HOW ABOUT IT?

I WOULD LIKE MY DISCIPLES TO HAVE A CHANCE TO LISTEN TO YOU.

WHA- BROTHER !!

SHUT UP, GAYA!! LET ME HANDLE THIS!

MY NAME IS NADI KASSAPA. THIS HERE IS GAYA KASSAPA, MY YOUNGER BROTHER. BETWEEN THE TWO OF US WE HAVE 500 DISCIPLES.

THEY COULD LEARN SO MUCH FROM YOU.

SOUTH OF HERE IS A LITTLE HILLOCK CALLED ELEPHANT'S HEAD MOUNTAIN. IN THE SUMMER, THAT'S SOMETIMES WHERE I GIVE LECTURES TO MY DISCIPLES.

I'LL ASK MY DISCIPLES WHETHER THEY THINK YOU'RE A TRUE SAINT.

I'D LIKE YOU TO COME TO ELEPHANT'S HEAD MOUNTAIN TOMORROW AT DAYBREAK.

IS THAT CONVENIENT FOR YOU?

YES. I'LL BE THERE.

I AM MUCH OBLIGED...

LET ME DISPATCH A BOAT FOR YOU.

...

BROTH-ER!

WHAT'S GOTTEN INTO YOU?

THIS IS CRAZY!

GAYA, GAYA... YOU REALLY THINK I WANT OUR DISCIPLES TO LISTEN TO HIM PREACH?

LISTEN WELL NOW. RIGHT BEFORE HE BEGINS, I SHALL SAY THIS TO HIM:

"WE CELEBRATE FIRE, WE WORSHIP FIRE. OUR DISCIPLES WILL ONLY LISTEN TO A SERMON ON FIRE!"

BUDDHA WILL FRET. FUMBLING HIS WORDS, HE'LL DELIVER A LAME SERMON.

OUR DISCIPLES WILL BEGIN TO LAUGH.

BUDDHA WILL BE THEIR LAUGHING STOCK...

HO HO HO!

ONCE OUR BROTHER URUVELA SEES THAT, HE'LL WAKE UP AND DUMP BUDDHA.

NOT ONLY WILL BUDDHA BE HUMILIATED, HE'LL ALSO LOOK FEEBLE!

I SEE. SO THAT'S YOUR PLAN!

YOU'RE BRILLIANT, BROTHER.

SHALL WE MAKE OUR DISCIPLES PRACTICE THEIR GUFFAWING?

WE MIGHT AS WELL SCORE A KNOCKOUT, HA HA HA.

ATTENTION! ALL DISCIPLES: TOMORROW AT 6 AM, THE HERETIC SAMANNA BUDDHA WILL LECTURE AT ELEPHANT'S H. M. ATTENDANCE IS MANDATORY. SO IS LAUGHING AT HIM! KASSAPA BROS.

HEY, THIS IS FROM OUR MASTERS.

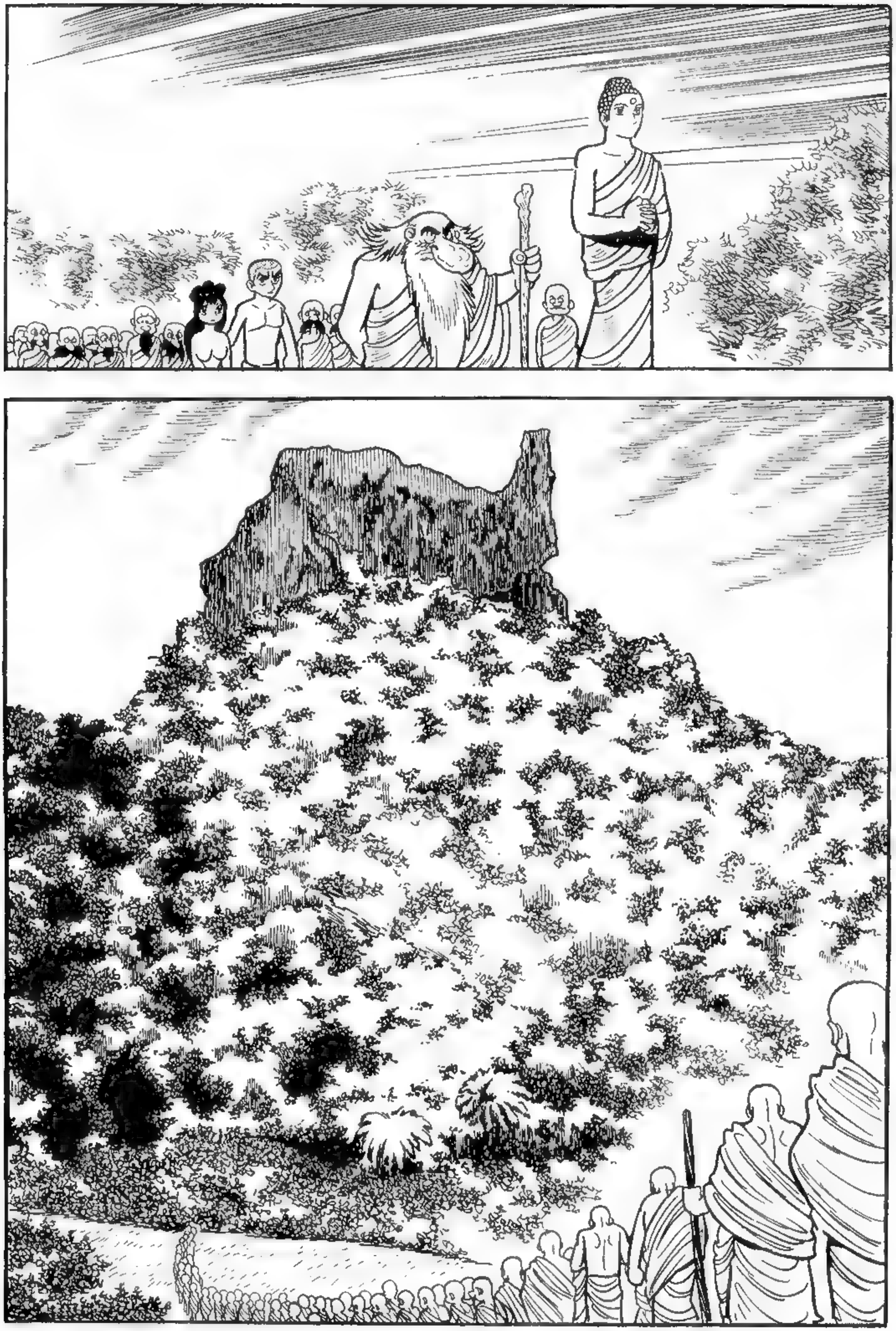
WHAT'S IT SAY ?

CAN'T READ ENGLISH ...

DUMMY. IT SAYS WE'RE GOING ON A HIKE!

CHAPTER EIGHT

SERMON AT ELEPHANT'S HEAD MOUNTAIN



AH, NADI KASSAPA. GOOD MORNING.

THANK YOU FOR COMING, BROTHER.

YOUR WHOLE GROUP HAS TURNED OUT TO KEEP BUDDHA COMPANY? WHAT DEDICATION.

HOW WE REJOICED WHEN BUDDHA RETURNED SUDDENLY BY BOAT...

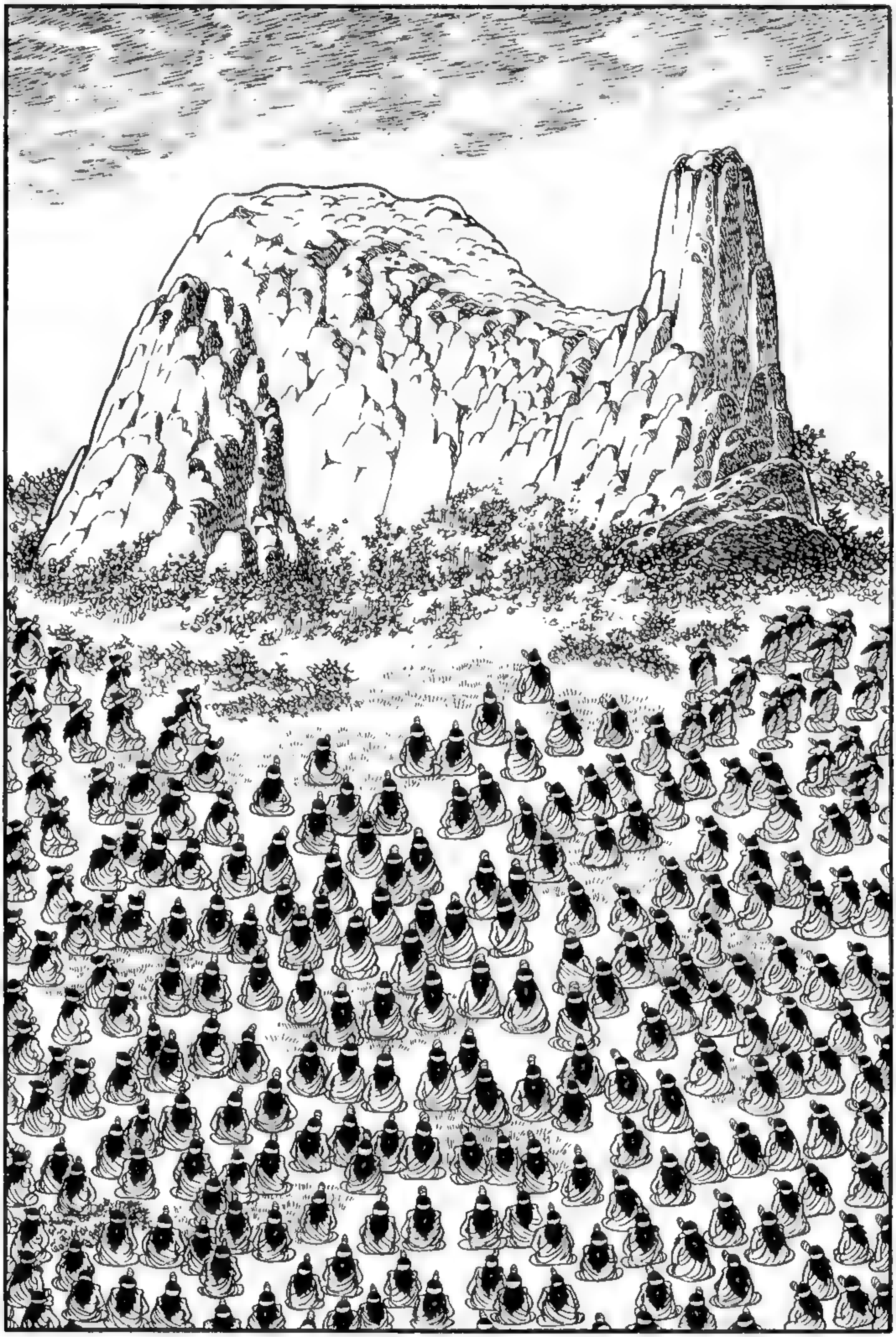
EAGER TO HEAR HIS SERMON, EVERY SINGLE ONE OF US IS HERE THIS MORNING.

HA HA... I'VE NO IDEA WHAT HE'LL BE SAYING. DON'T BE DISAPPOINTED !

RATHER, MAY BUDDHA'S WORDS AWAKEN YOU AND MAKE YOU A FOLLOWER.

BUT WHERE ARE GAYA AND THE OTHER DISCIPLES?

THEY'VE ALREADY TAKEN THEIR SEATS AND ARE GETTING TIRED OF WAITING.



I'M WARNING YOU, OUR DISCIPLES ARE ALL VERY SERIOUS.

THEY WON'T TAKE KINDLY TO ANY FUDGING. THEY'LL BOO YOU.

I'VE NOTHING OF THE SORT.

DO YOU HAVE ANY LECTURE NOTES?

SO YOU'RE GOING TO WING IT...

HERE, PLEASE

DON'T WORRY, YOU WON'T HAVE TO SHOUT. VOICES CARRY WELL FROM WHERE YOU SIT.

ALL RIGHT! LIGHT THE FIRE!

BOM!

NADI!! WHAT ARE YOU THINKING? WE ARE NOT A SECT OF FIRE WORSHIPPERS. PUT OUT THAT THING!

OH REALLY? BUT WHY SHOULD I?

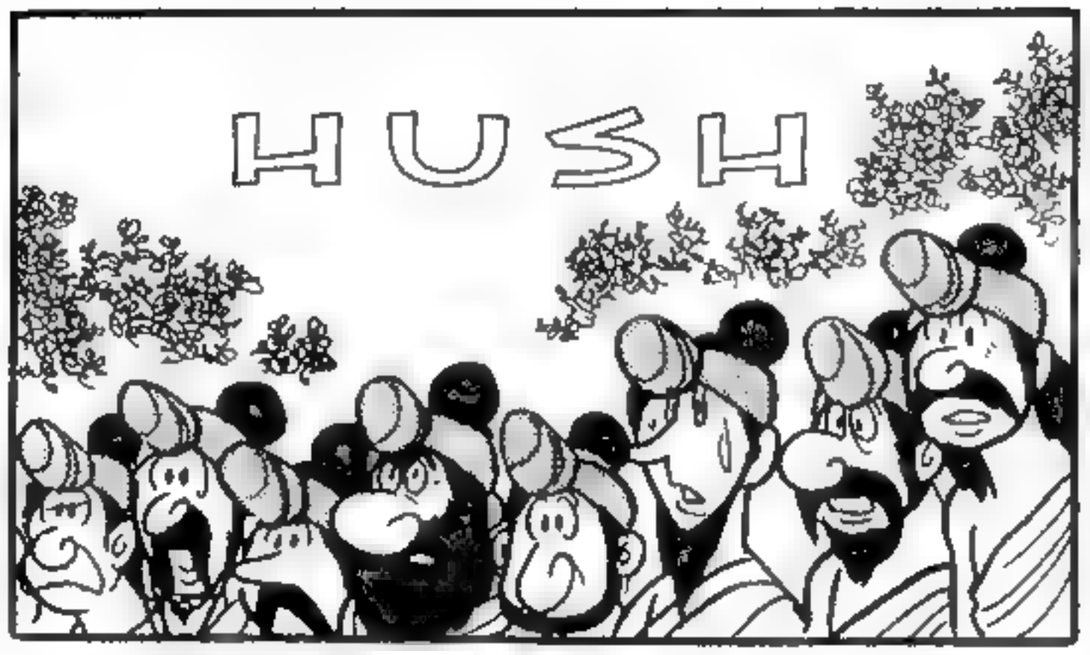
BUDDHA. NOW THAT THE FIRE IS LIT, YOU MUST TALK ABOUT FIRE.

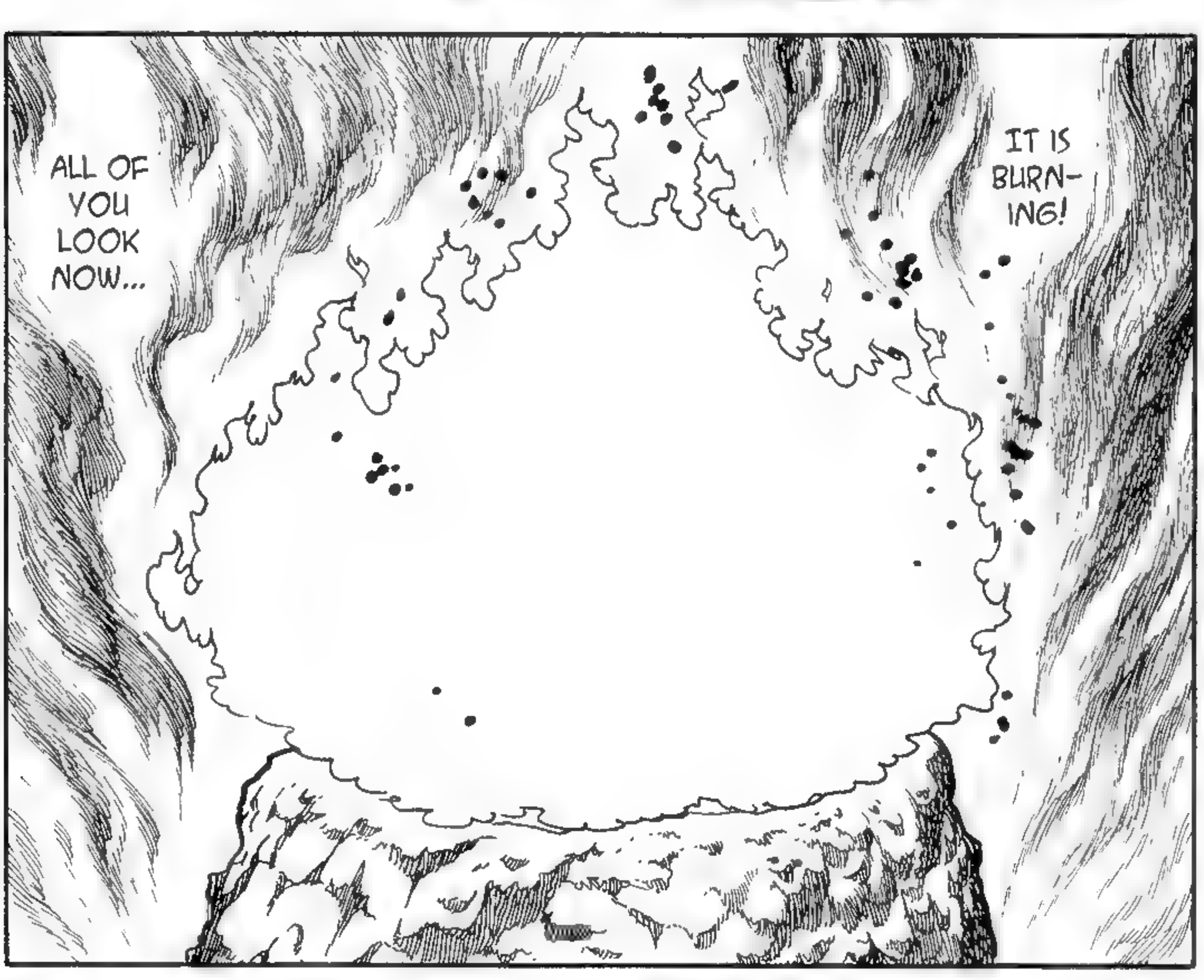
OUR DISCIPLES ARE ONLY INTERESTED IN FIRE. YOU NEED ADDRESS NO OTHER SUBJECT!

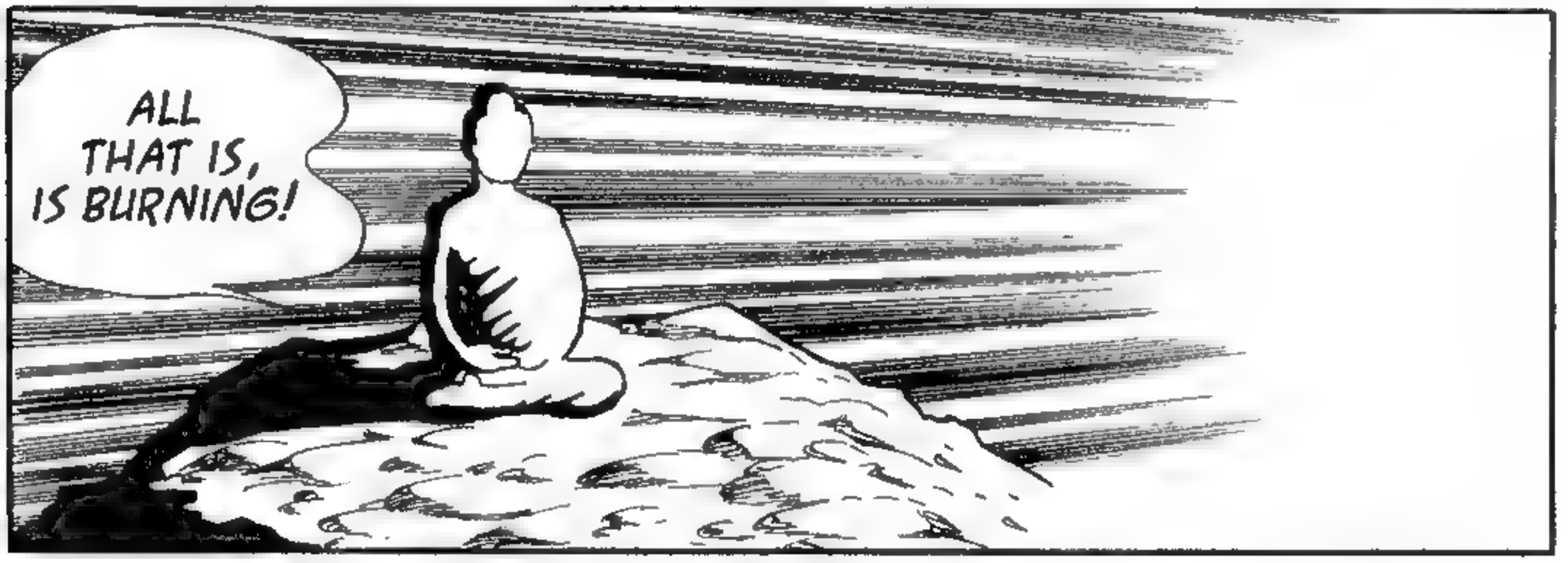
THIS IS OUR SACRED GROUND WHERE WE CELEBRATE THE GODS AND PRAY TO THEM. IT'S OUR CUSTOM TO LIGHT A FIRE BEFORE A SERMON.

WE'VE HAD ENOUGH OF FIRE!

IT'S BURNING ...


HUSH


ALL OF YOU LOOK NOW...
IT IS BURN-ING!


ALL THAT IS, IS BURNING!

PEOPLE ...

CAN SUCH A RAGING FIRE BE PUT OUT IN AN INSTANT?

IT CAN, BY ANYBODY!

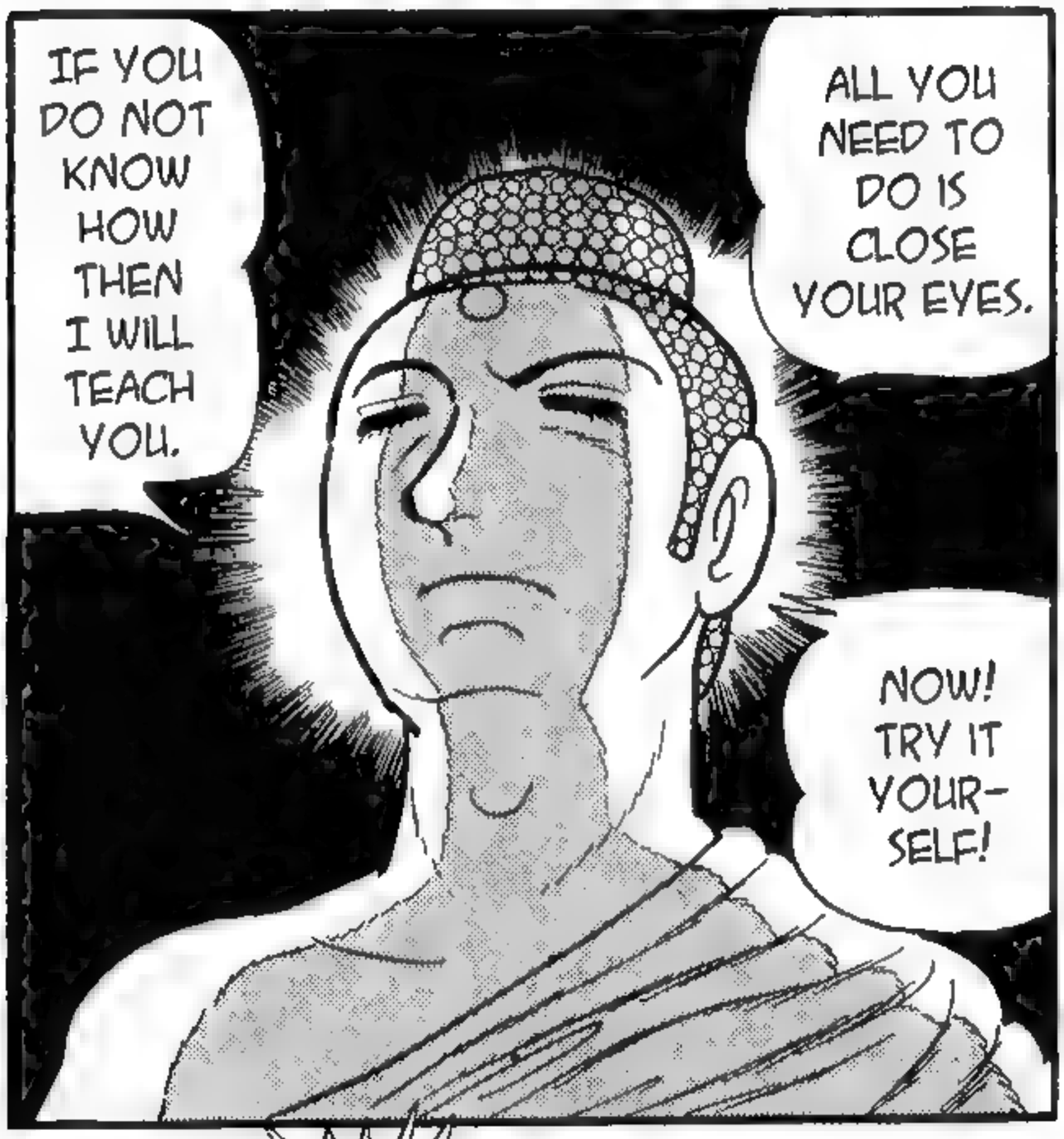
NOT JUST THIS FIRE!

I MEAN EVERY FLAME IN THE WORLD.

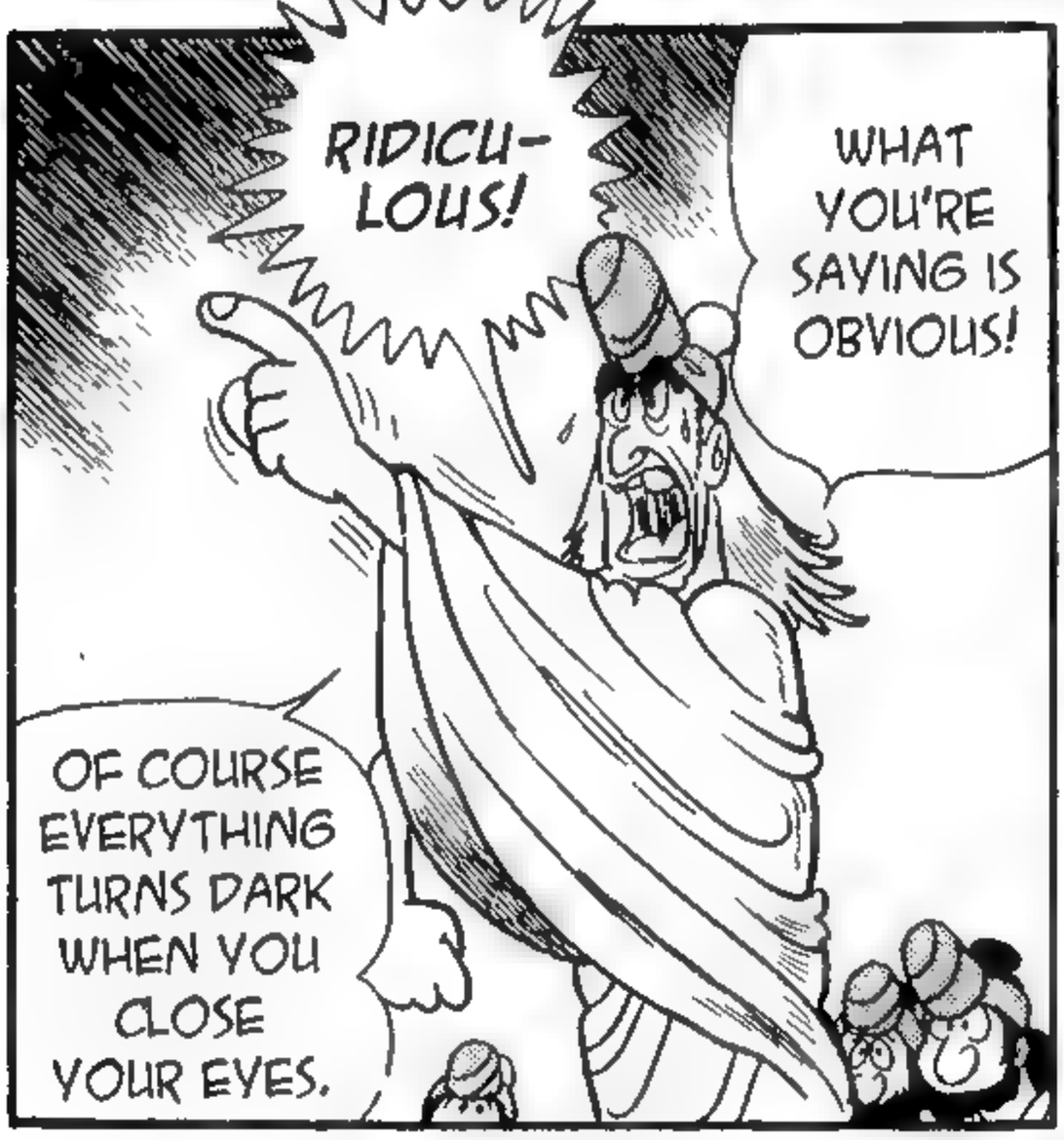
YOU TOO, NADI KASSAPA! YOU CAN EXTINGUISH IT!

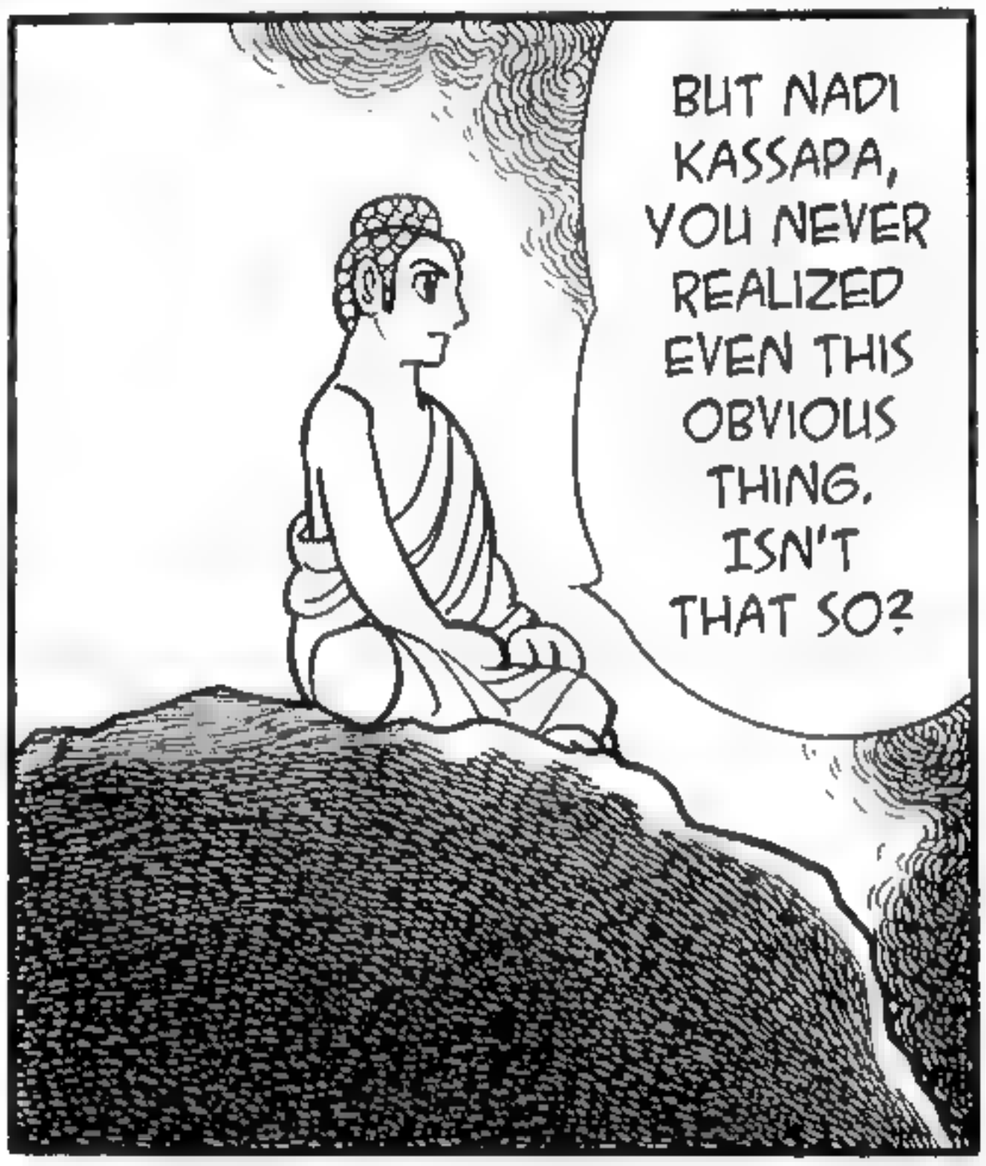
HOW?

WHISPER
MURMUR
STIR
STIR


IF YOU DO NOT KNOW HOW THEN I WILL TEACH YOU.
ALL YOU NEED TO DO IS CLOSE YOUR EYES.
NOW! TRY IT YOUR-SELF!

EVERYTHING VANISHES
HEY, YOU'RE RIGHT.


RIDICU-LOUS!
WHAT YOU'RE SAYING IS OBVIOUS!
OF COURSE EVERYTHING TURNS DARK WHEN YOU CLOSE YOUR EYES.


BUT NADI KASSAPA, YOU NEVER REALIZED EVEN THIS OBVIOUS THING. ISN'T THAT SO?

OUR MASTER'S FACE GETS SO LONG WHEN HE STARTS YELLING.

C'MON! EVEN IF I CLOSE MY EYES, I'LL FEEL THE GLOW ON MY FACE. THE HEAT DOESN'T GO AWAY JUST BECAUSE I SHUT MY EYES.

THEN WEAR A BASKET ON YOUR HEAD.

THE GLOW WILL BE GONE AS WELL.

ERR...

HMPH

DOES ANYONE HERE WANT TO EAT WELL, SLEEP MORE, FIND A GIRLFRIEND, OR PERHAPS LIVE A LONG LIFE?

IF SO, RAISE YOUR HAND.

YE-S

THE HEART OF MAN IS ALWAYS BURNING FOR WHAT IT DESIRES!

HIS PURSUITS BRING TEARS, ANGER, AND WORRY.

YET THAT CAN ALL VANISH TOO! IF, INSTEAD OF SHUTTING YOUR EYES, YOU CAN SEAL YOUR HEART...

BUT HOW DO YOU DO THAT ?

YOU EMPTY YOUR THOUGHTS AND FORGET EVEN YOURSELF.

FORGET... EVERYTHING!

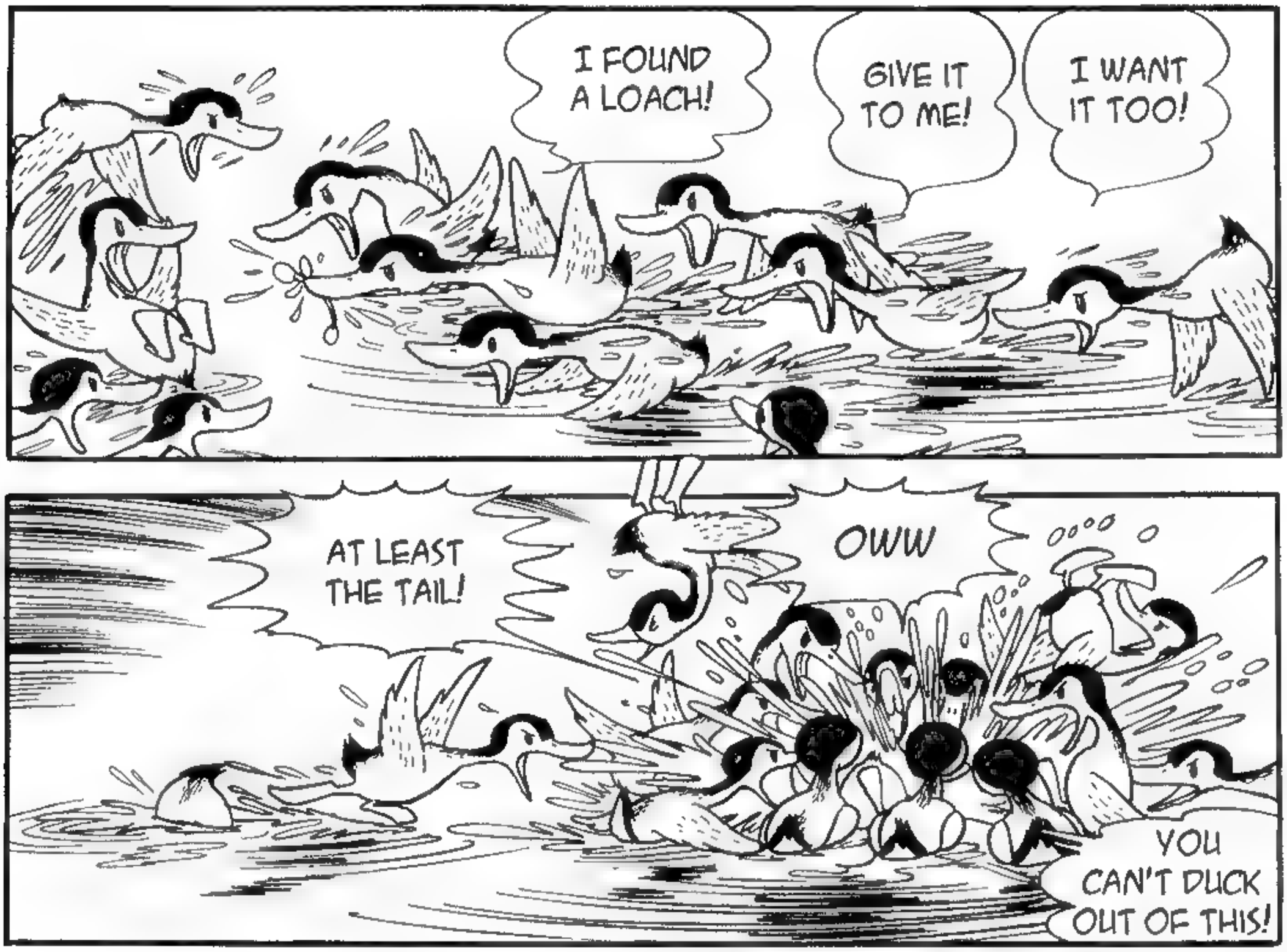
MU

THEN YOUR DOUBTS AND WORRIES WILL DISAPPEAR, YOU WILL SUFFER LESS NOT MORE, YOU WILL EVEN MERGE WITH NATURE!

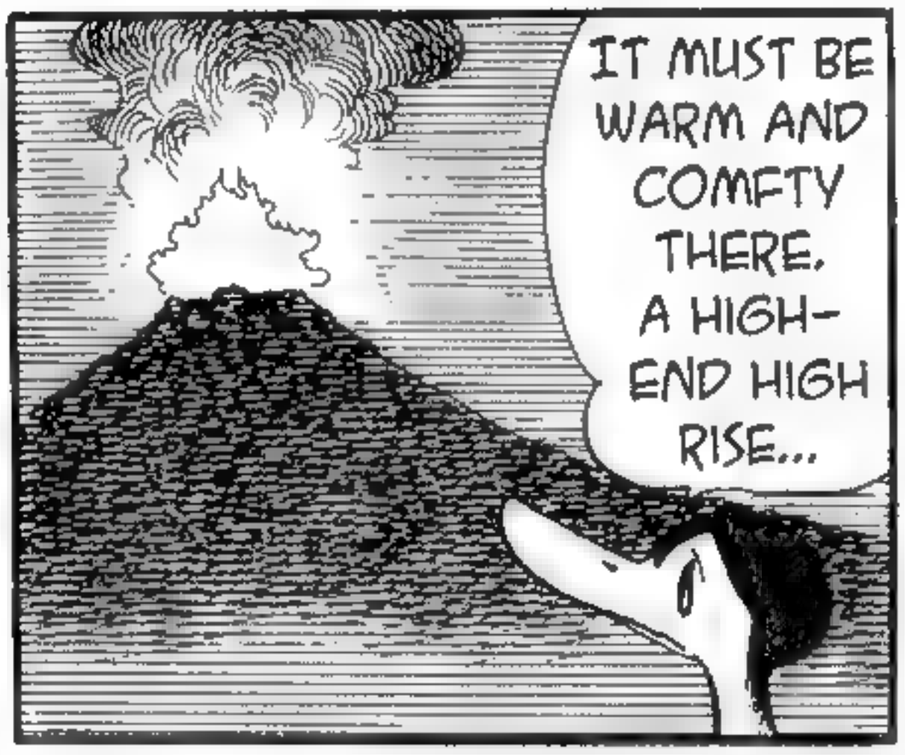
THERE ONCE WAS A FLOCK OF DUCKS IN A POND.

THE POND HAD SO FEW FISH THAT THE DUCKS WERE ALWAYS STARVING.

GRR


I FOUND A LOACH!
GIVE IT TO ME!
I WANT IT TOO!
AT LEAST THE TAIL!
OWW
YOU CAN'T DUCK OUT OF THIS!

ONE FREEZING-COLD DAY, A DUCK SPOKE OUT.
I'M GONNA MOVE TO THAT FIRE MOUNTAIN.


IT MUST BE WARM AND COMFTY THERE. A HIGH-END HIGH RISE...

COME WITH ME WHO WILL!

ONE DAY WHEN IT GOT EVEN COLDER, ANOTHER DUCK SPOKE UP.

THIS PLACE CALLED THE SEA IS A THOUSAND TIMES BIGGER THAN OUR POND. LOADS OF FISH!

GRR

GRR

LET'S GO!

COME, OR MISS OUT ON THE FEAST.

THEN, ON AN EVEN COLDER DAY, ANOTHER DUCK SPOKE UP.

CAN'T STAND THE WILD LIFE NO MORE. I'M OFF TO HUMAN TERRITORY, WHERE I CAN GET DOMESTICATED.

YEAH, THEY'LL FEED US AND MAKE US A NICE NEST BOX TOO.

OH WELL... THEY'RE ALL GONE, HMM...

WE DON'T NEED NUTHIN. WE'LL STAY PUT IN THIS HERE POND LIKE WILD DUCKS OUGHTA.

THAT WINTER WAS ESPECIALLY HARSH.

BUT THESE DUCKS STAYED, DESIRE-LESS.

THINKING NOTHING, HOPING NOTHING, THEY KEPT STILL.

THEY DREAMED NEITHER OF TASTY FOOD NOR OF WARM NESTS...

MEANWHILE, THE DUCKS THAT MADE FOR THE BURNING PEAK...

...CAME TO A BOWL OF FIRE AND BREATHED ITS NOXIOUS FUMES.

MANY DIED THEN. THE MOUNTAIN WAS UTTERLY BARREN, AND THE SURVIVORS STARVED TO DEATH.

WHAT BECAME OF THE DUCKS WHO FOUND THE SEA?

FLOATING ON IT THEY LOVED HOW FULL IT WAS OF FISH. BUT TALL WAVES CAME CRASHING AGAINST THE CLIFF BEFORE THEY COULD LEAP INTO THE AIR. THE ONES WHO SURVIVED DIDN'T HAVE A MOMENT OF RESPITE.

THE DUCKS THAT ENTERED HUMAN TERRITORY WERE ATTACKED AND EATEN RIGHT AWAY.

IN THE END, ONLY THOSE DUCKS LIVED ON WHO'D NOT WISH FOR MORE.

LET ME TELL YOU ANOTHER STORY. ONCE UPON A TIME, THERE WAS A PROSPEROUS CITY, ALWAYS BUSY, ALWAYS AGLOW...

210 B.C. FOX

AT A DISTANCE, ITS LIGHTS HAD ON HUES OF RED AND BLUE THAT SEEMED TO BECKON TO TRAVELERS.

PEOPLE

POURED INTO THE CITY

DRAWN BY THE LIGHT.

ONCE INSIDE, IT WAS ALWAYS DAY IN DOWNTOWN, WHERE ADS AND SIGNS FILLED THE STREETS...

DRESSED-UP WOMEN TEASED MEN FOR FANCY DINNERS...

AND MEN HATCHED CORRUPT SCHEMES JUST TO MAKE THE EXTRA CENT.

ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE CITY, QUITE IGNORED, STOOD THE LONE HOUSE OF A POOR, SHABBY WATER-SELLER.

WE THANK HEAVEN FOR THIS MEAL.

I'M SICK OF BEING POOR!

HERE YOU GO AGAIN...

CAN'T YOU SEE THOSE BLUE LIGHTS, THOSE RED LIGHTS OUTSIDE OUR WINDOW?

THEY SELL EVERYTHING THERE! THEY ALL LIVE LIKE KINGS!

WE'RE THE ONLY ONES WHO'RE POOR! MA! WHY?

I WANT US TO MOVE THERE AND LIVE LIKE RICH FOLKS!

WHAT DID YOU SAY ?!

SIT!!

ANOTHER LECTURE ...

NO ONE IN OUR FAMILY'S SICK. THERE'S FOOD ON OUR TABLE. WHAT MORE DO YOU WANT?

HUH?

I'M NOT A GROWN-UP... I WANNA PLAY...

PLAY? PLAY ALL YOU WANT! GO PLAY WITH YOUR FRIENDS.

BUY ME A COM-PUTER!

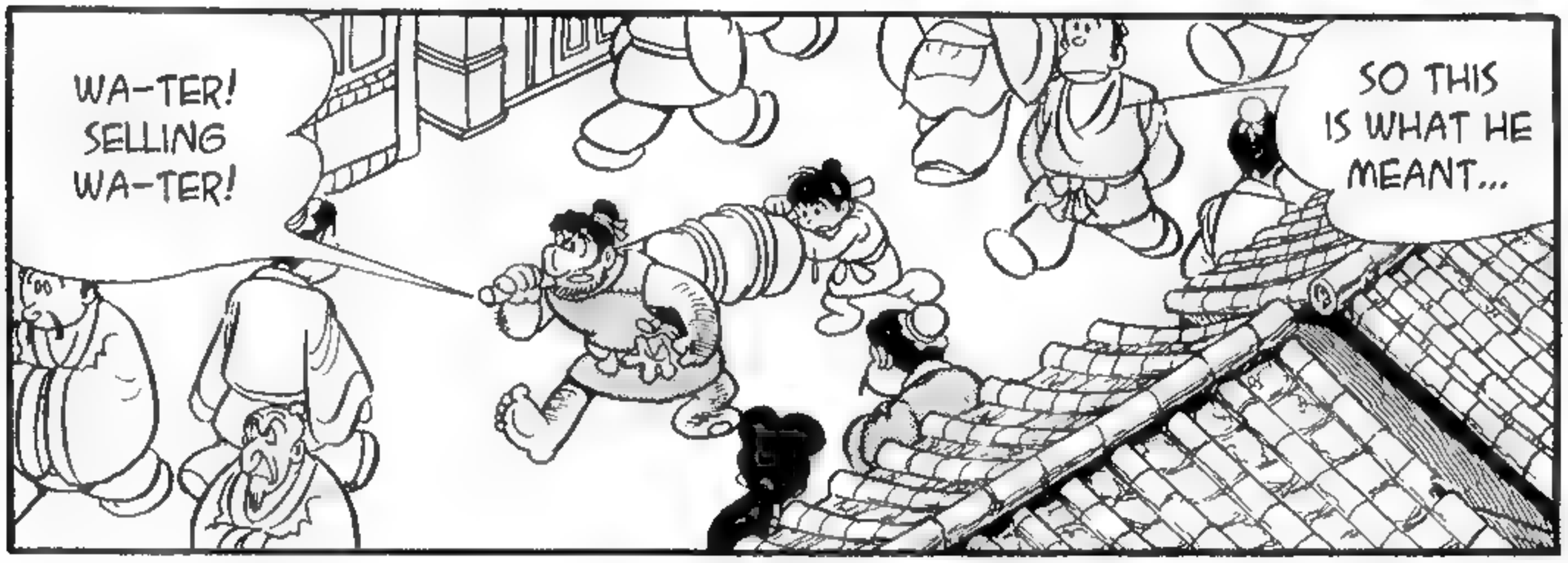
I WANT A BICYCLE !

I WANNA WATCH MOVIES! EVERY DAY!

HEY, LOOK AT THOSE CATS AND DOGS. THEY DON'T NEED NO POPSICLE TO HAVE A GOOD TIME.
YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT, DAD...

HOW LONG DO WE HAVE TO KEEP ON DIGGING THIS WELL?
USE YOUR HEAD FOR ONCE. NO MATTER HOW GOOD YOUR WELL IS, IT COULD ALWAYS GO EMPTY.
WE GOTTA DIG DEEP JUST IN CASE. DEEP AS WE CAN.

IF YOU DIG WITH ME SOME MORE, I'LL TAKE YOU TO TOWN AFTER WE SUP.
REAL-LY?


WA-TER! SELLING WA-TER!
SO THIS IS WHAT HE MEANT...

GOT

IDIOT

STOP GAWKING AROUND LIKE THAT! I WANNA BE HEARING YOUR VOICE!

WATER ...

ANYONE NEED WA-TER? WE GOT WA... OH, THIS SUCKS!

HOW 'BOUT I BECOME A RUN-AWAY?

I'LL SHOW YOU... SELLING WATER'S FOR LOSERS.

IT SMELLS SO GOOD. I WANNA TASTE SOMETHING YUMMY...

HOW MIGHT I MAKE MONEY AND EAT GOOD STUFF?

I KNOW! I'LL WORK AT A RESTAURANT.

未来大飯店

HUBBA HUBBA! SPEED IT UP, YOU HEAR ME? THE GUESTS! THE GUESTS ARE WAITING!

I GOT THIS ONE...

HERE YOU ARE, SIR.

山海珍千客萬來

COMING ...

WHO ARE YOU?

I JUST WANTED TO HELP OUT.

HA HA, WHAT A CURIOUS FELLOW. WANT TO WORK HERE?

I'LL DO ANYTHING, OWNER! ANYTHING BEATS SELLING WATER.

YOU'VE LEARNED THAT TOO! SMART KID...

HEH HEH

TIP

THANK YOU

PLEASE COME AGAIN
SMACK SMACK
WELCOME! THIS WAY!
HE WAS SOON APPOINTED MANAGER.
SO BUSY ...
SO BUSY !
I'LL SAVE UP AND BUY MY OWN RESTAURANT SOMEDAY. THEN I'LL REALLY RAKE IT IN.
LAD, SPARE ME A DRINK...
I'VE GOT NO TIME FOR BEGGARS !
COME, COME. YOU HAVE SO MUCH MONEY.
I EARNED IT! WHY SHOULD I SHARE IT WITH A STRANGER?

HOW ARE YOU GOING TO SPEND ALL THAT MONEY ?

I'LL BUY FANCY CLOTHES, EAT AND DRINK WELL, AND DANCE WITH GIRLS!

OKAY...NOW TAKE A PEEK INTO THIS GOURD.

JUST TAKE A LOOK!

WHY, IT'S ME !!

I SEE MYSELF IN THE GOURD...

AND I'M WRAPPED IN BLUE FLAMES!!

WHO'S THAT IN THERE?!

BLUE FLAMES, YOU SAY? HA HA HA

WHAT ARE THOSE FLAMES? IT'S KIND OF CREEPY

THOSE ARE THE FLAMES OF DESIRE

WHAT?

THEY'RE THE FLAMES OF BURNING HUMAN DESIRE

WOW. THE FIRE'S GETTING STRONGER.

BECAUSE YOU'RE SO ATTACHED TO MONEY AND PLAY !

NOW LOOK AT OTHERS. THEY BURN TOO...

FOR SUCCESS, FOR THE DEAL, FOR RICHES ...

FOR FAME, FOR LEISURE, FOR FEASTS... DESIRE BURNS!

WHOA... EVERY-ONE IN THIS CITY!

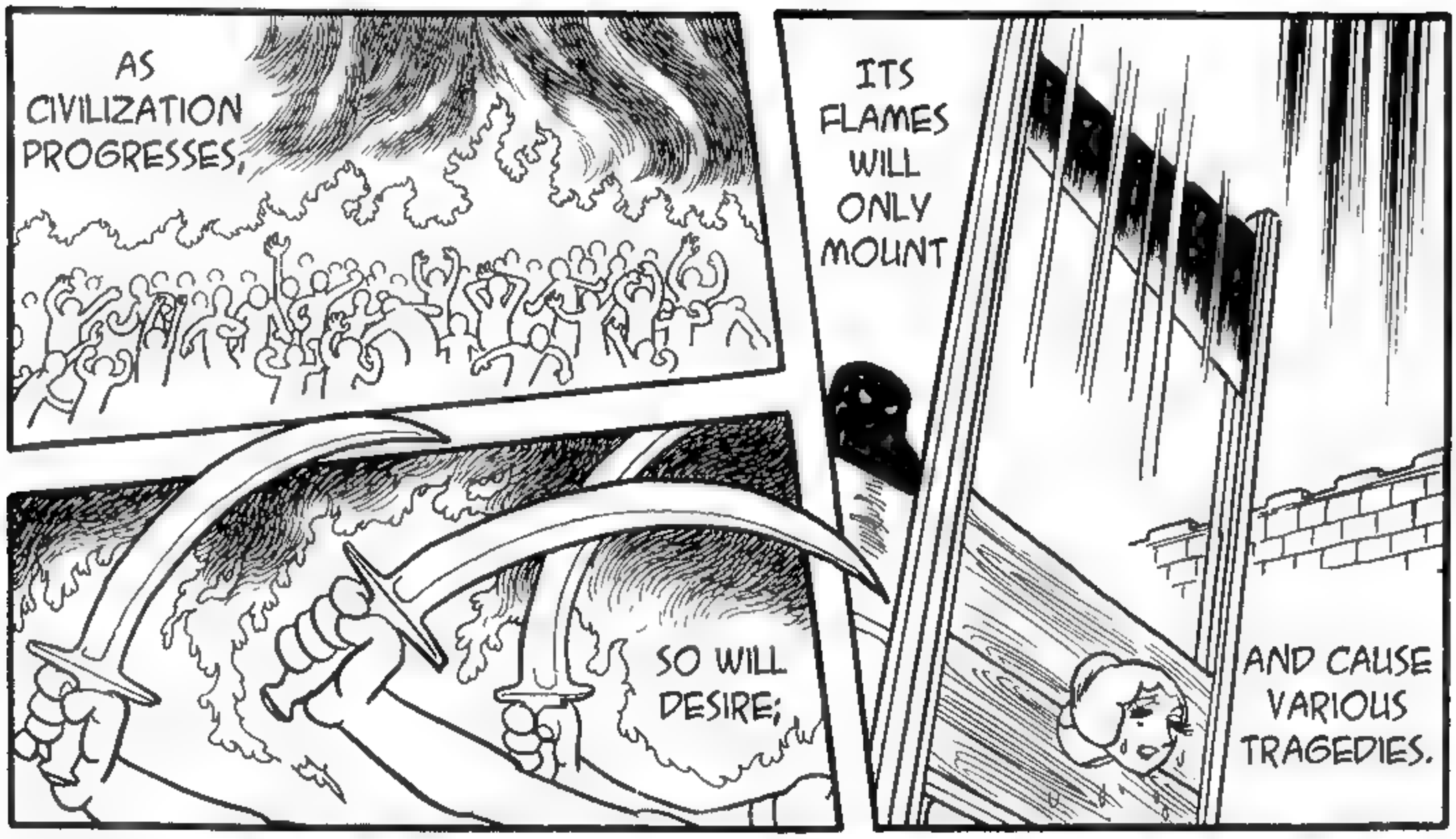
CORRECT. HUMANS ARE ALL ENGULFED IN DESIRE.

HA HA! THE FIRE'S ONLY GETTING STRONGER.

I'M NOT SURPRISED. YOUR DESIRE SEEMS BOTTOMLESS.

THAT FIRE IS DANGEROUS. IN THE END, IT WILL BURN YOU UP.

I DON'T BELIEVE YOU!


AS CIVILIZATION PROGRESSES,
SO WILL DESIRE;
ITS FLAMES WILL ONLY MOUNT
AND CAUSE VARIOUS TRAGEDIES.

IN THE END THE WHOLE WORLD WILL PERISH.

IF HUMANS WANT TO SURVIVE, THIS FIRE MUST BE PUT OUT.

THAT MEANS QUENCHING ALL DESIRE AND LIVING ACCORDING TO NATURE.

ARE YOU SOME HERMIT ?

HOW MUCH CAN I PAY FOR THIS?

I WANNA SURPRISE THE GIRLS.

YOU'LL SELL, WON'T YOU?

THAT'S NOT FOR SALE. IT'S A GIFT. TO YOU.

LISTEN TO ME NOW. WHEN IT LOOKS LIKE THE FLAMES HAVE SWAL-LOWED YOU COMPLETELY ...BEWARE!

HAH... OLD MAN'S GONE.

LOOK AT THAT! THE OWNER'S SENILE WITH DESIRE.

AND HIS WIFE'S BURNING IT UP TOO!

EVERYBODY'S BURNING ANYWAY! SO BURN AWAY!

THIS GOURD REALLY IS SOME-THING.

IF I CAN MASS-PRODUCE IT, MY PROFITS WILL BE HUGE!

WELCOME !!! THIS WAY

CHECK FOR NO. 18!

WE'LL EXTEND OUR HOURS PAST MIDNIGHT. I'VE ALREADY BRIBED THE OFFICIALS.

LIGHTS! WE NEED MORE LIGHTS!!

HMM, WE'RE NOT GETTING AS MANY GUESTS THESE DAYS. IS IT BECAUSE OF THE RECESSION?

IT'S BECAUSE THAT NEW RESTAURANT OVER THERE IS ADVERTISING ITSELF SO WELL.

RUMOR HAS IT THAT THEY USE 5,000 CANDLES.

WE'LL LIGHT 10,000 CANDLES!

GUESTS TEND TO ENTER THE SHOWIER PLACE, SIR.

HMPH

DAMMIT

ZHANG 長安

LOOK! OUR RIVAL GOT NEW ILLUMINATION THAT LOOKS LIKE A VOLCANO!

THEN LIGHT 50,000 CANDLES!

IF WE AREN'T BRIGHTER, YOU'RE FIRED!

WHUMP

WE CAN'T BACK DOWN NOW. WE HAVE TO LURE BACK ALL OUR GUESTS.

THEY GOT A NEON SIGN!

WE'LL MAKE ONE WITH OUR CANDLES!

MAKE IT BIG, AND HURRY!

EH, LAD, YOU'RE GOING TOO FAR WITH THIS.

IF WE LOSE NOW, WE'LL NEVER RECOVER, SIR!

YESSS! A SIGN MADE OF 100,000 CANDLES!

M-MY BODY ...

I'M TOTALLY HIDDEN IN THE BLUE FIRE!!

ARGH! THE WIND'S KNOCKING OVER THE CANDLES!

FIRE!

WHAT DID I TELL YOU? TAKE RESPONSI-BILITY!

NO! IT'S THE WIND'S FAULT!

RUN!! THE FIRE'S SPREADING!

ALREADY?!

THE FIRE SWEPT ACROSS THE CITY!

THE RIVER HAD JUST RUN DRY... WITH NO WATER, THE FIRE COULDN'T BE PUT OUT.

88,495 HOUSES DESTROYED— 2,236 DEAD— 719 MISSING— 92 DECIBELS OF NOISE

THE CITY BURNED TO THE GROUND.

THE BOY MANAGED TO ESCAPE TO THE OUT-SKIRTS.

...

HEY !! IT'S STILL THERE!! MY HOME!

MY FOLKS' PLACE ...

I BET IT BURNED DOWN TOO...

MA...! MA...

SO YOU'RE BACK, YOU BRAT.

GET UP, YOU! HELP DOUSE THE WALLS!

HA HA... O-OUR HOME MADE IT...

THANKS TO OUR WELL. PLENTY OF WATER OUR WELL GAVE US.

THE BOY STARED AT HIS FATHER THROUGH THE GOURD.

AND IT'S TOLD THAT THERE WASN'T A SINGLE FLICKER OF THAT BLUE FIRE ON HIS FATHER.

WHAT DO YOU THINK? JUST A PARABLE, YES, BUT IS THE SON BETTER, OR THE FATHER? YOU, MONKS, SHOULD KNOW THE ANSWER.

EVEN A WATER-SELLER CAN RID HIMSELF OF WORRY AND DESIRE AND LIVE ACCORDING TO NATURE. IN THE END, THAT WINS!

THAT WAS A PARABLE, BUT IT'S THE SAME FOR THE CROCODILES IN THAT RIVER.

THEY EAT TO STAY ALIVE, AND THEY DESIRE NOTHING MORE AND NOTHING LESS! THAT'S THE WAY TO LIVE.

I HAVE A QUESTION. I'M PRONE TO ILLNESS, AFRAID OF DEATH...

...I BECAME MASTER KASSAPA'S DISCIPLE. BUT I AM STILL AFRAID. WHAT CAN I DO?

WHAT IS TORMENTING YOU EXACTLY, YOUR ILLNESS OR THE FEAR OF DYING?

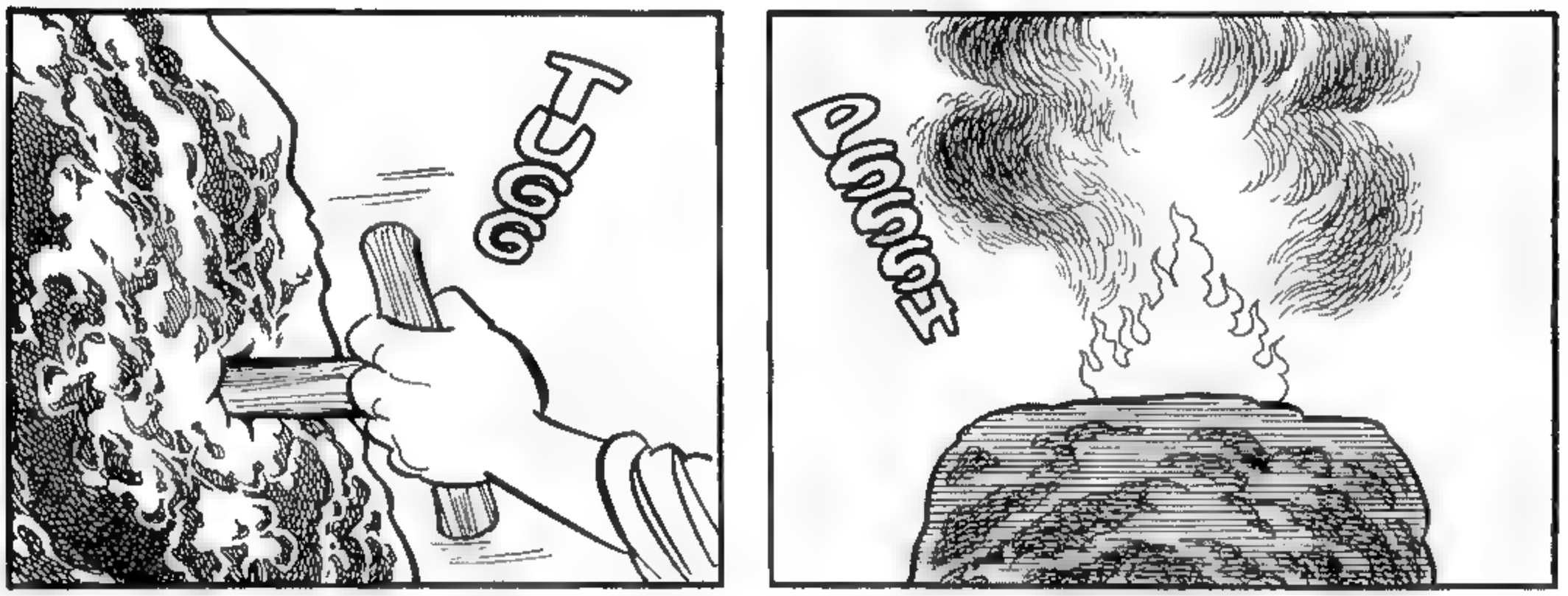
BOTH, SIR.

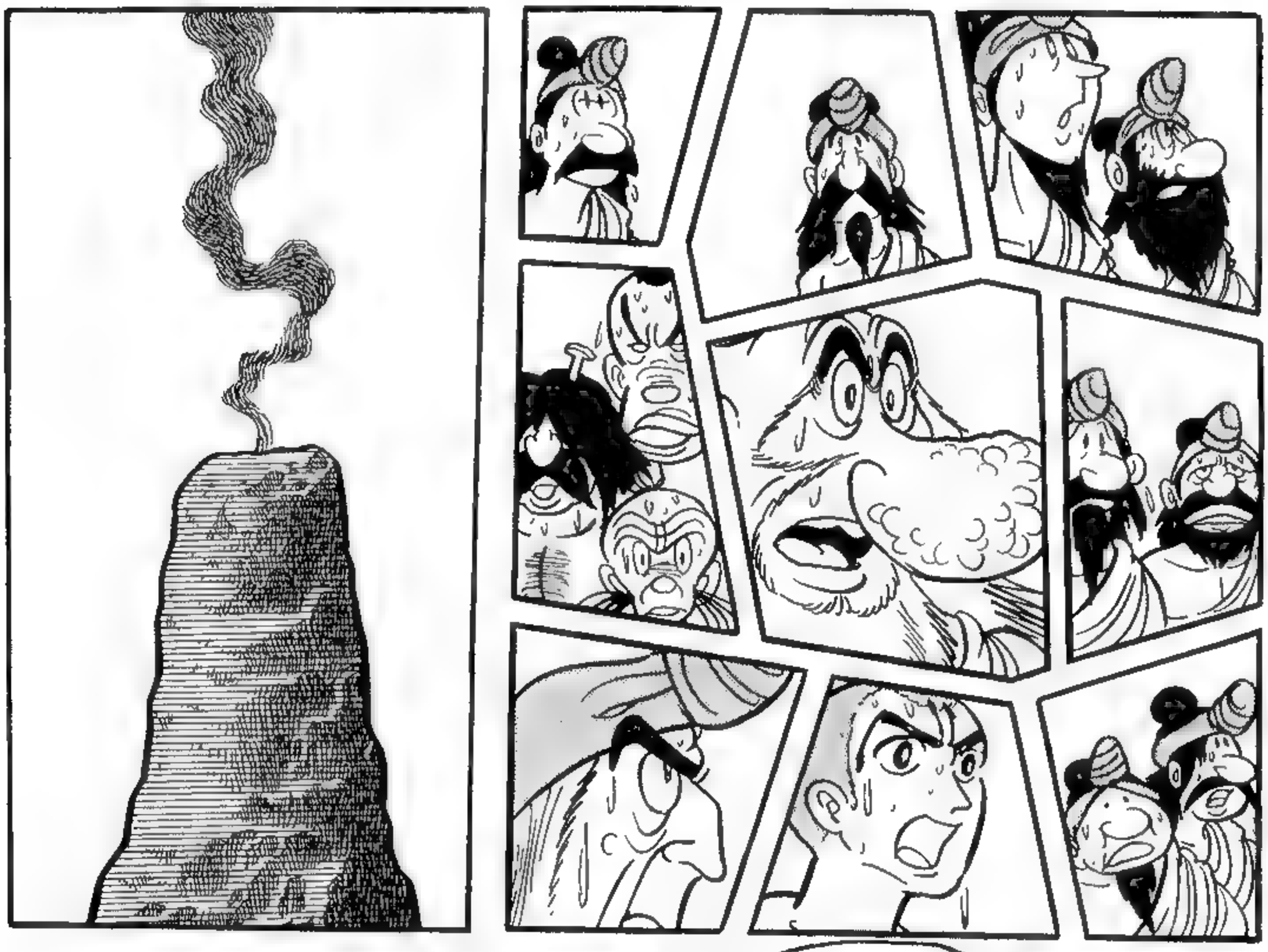
BOTH TORMENT ME...

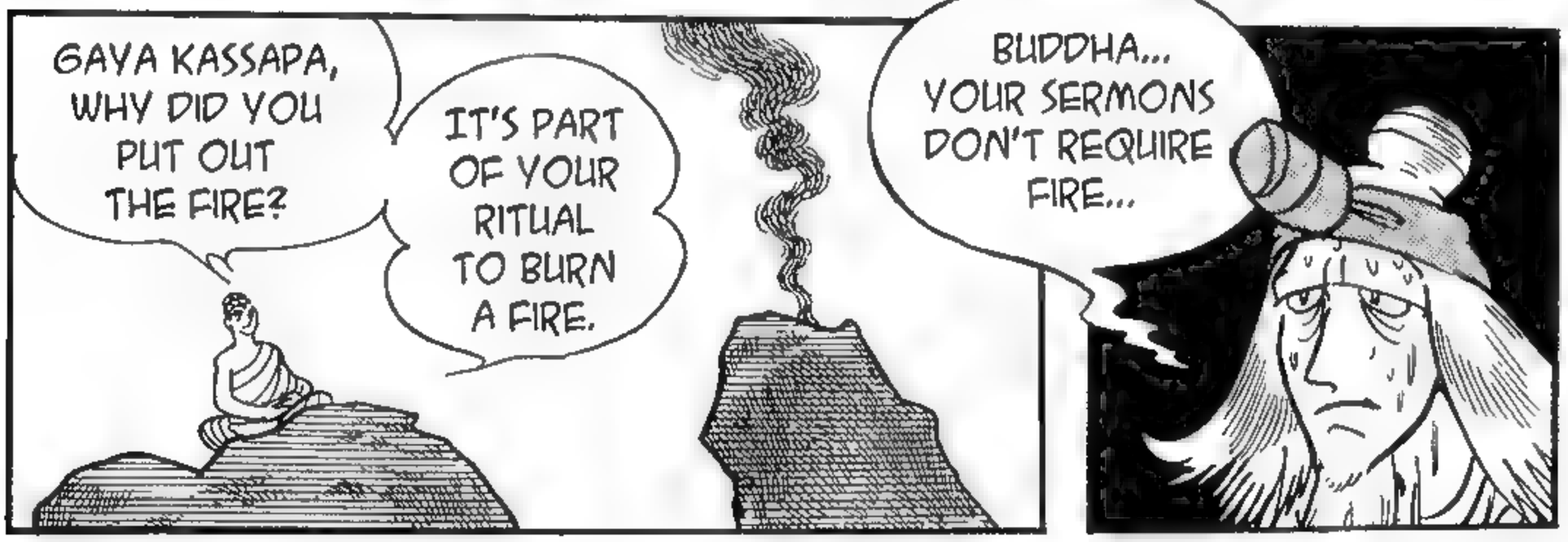
I WANT TO BE CURED...

I WANT TO GET HEALTHY!

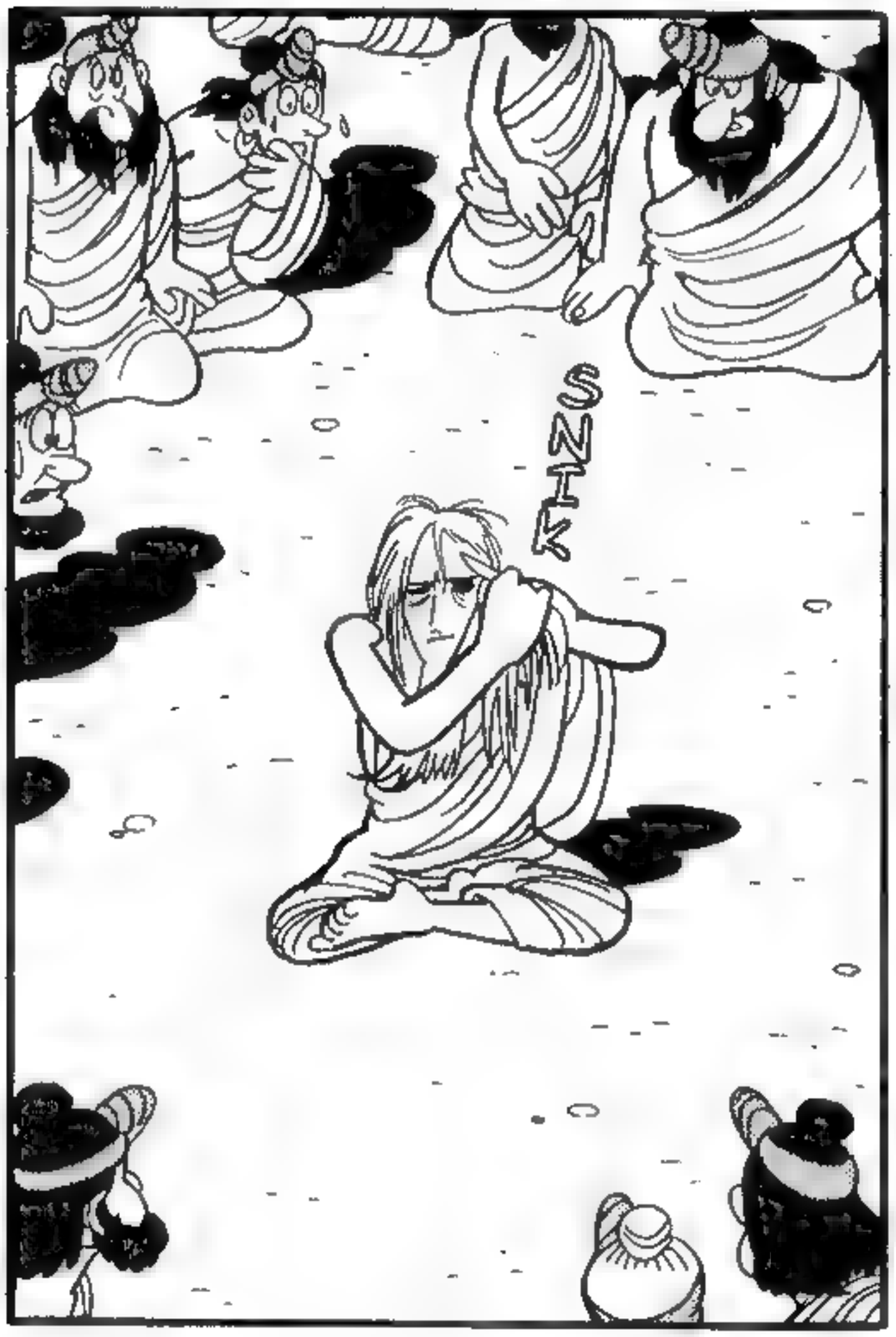
THINK OF YOURSELF AS A FIRE, AND LET ALL YOUR DESIRES AND WORRIES DIE OUT, JUST LIKE A FIRE...YOU WILL THEN GAIN HEALTH, OF MIND AND BODY ALIKE.

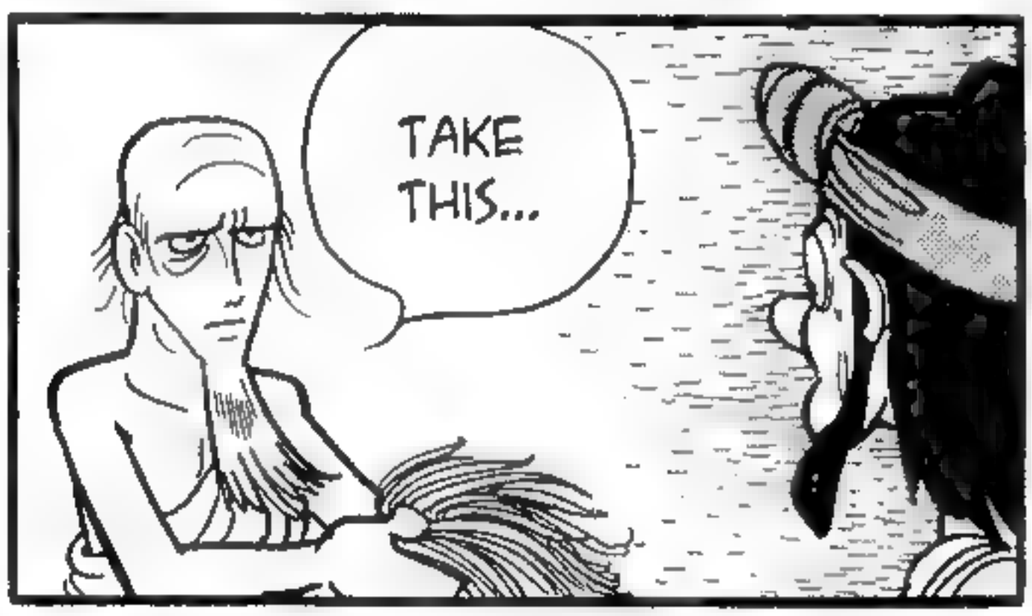

FOOD
SOMEONE

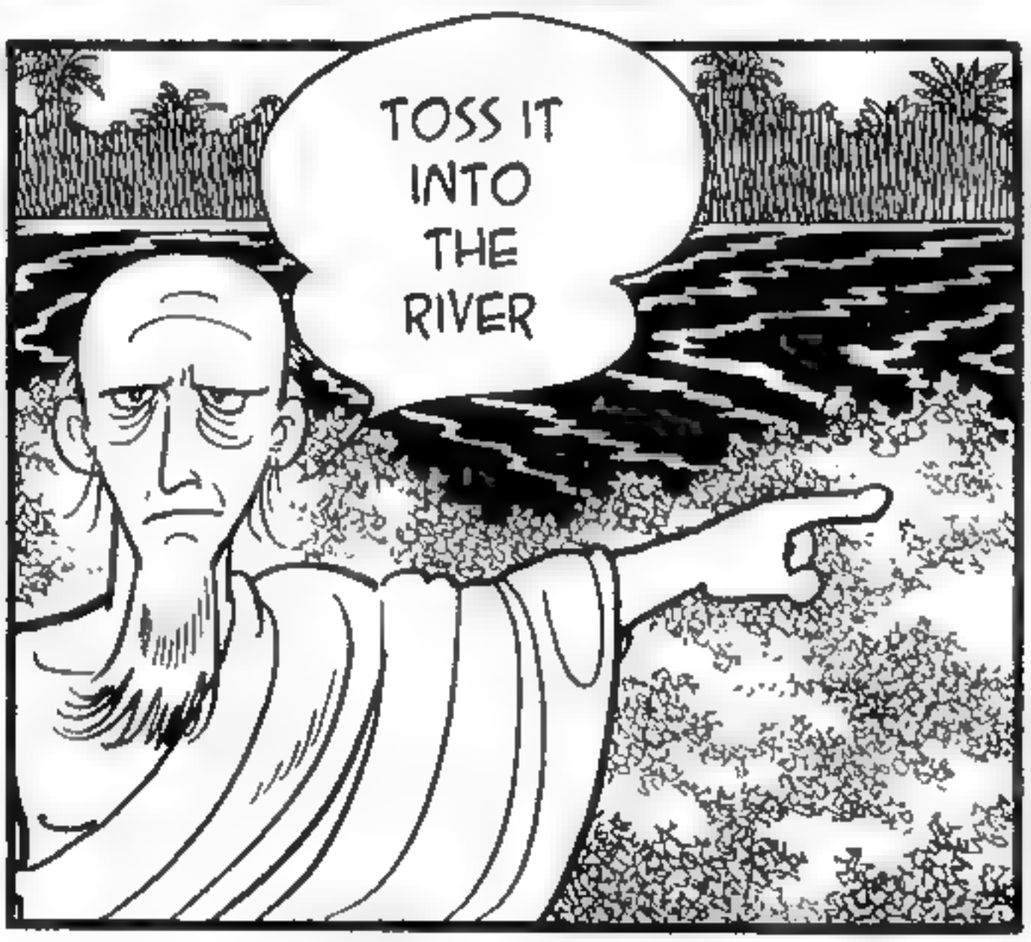



GAYA KASSAPA, WHY DID YOU PUT OUT THE FIRE?
IT'S PART OF YOUR RITUAL TO BURN A FIRE.
BUDDHA... YOUR SERMONS DON'T REQUIRE FIRE...

SNIDD


SNIK


TAKE THIS...


TOSS IT INTO THE RIVER

BROTHER... DO NOT BE ANGRY WITH ME.
AS OF TODAY... I LEAVE OUR SECT.
...

I FEAR THAT I NEED TO COMPLETELY RE-EXAMINE ...

THE WORLDVIEW THAT I'VE HELD TO UNTIL NOW.

I WILL JOIN THIS MAN AND START FROM SCRATCH. I WANT TO TRAIN WITH HIM.

IF YOU FEEL BETRAYED, THEN PLEASE. PUNISH ME NOW.

YOU WILL NOT CHANGE MY MIND.

WELL SAID, GAYA!

IF GAYA HAS BECOME A TRAITOR, THEN NADI SHALL BE A TRAITOR TOO...

I WILL START ALL OVER AGAIN.

BUDDHA,
WE BROTHERS
SHALL REVERE
YOUR TEACHINGS
FOR ALL
ETERNITY!

WELL SAID...
...GOOD,
GOOD...

UH

ARGH

DAMN THEM

AND THAT WAS VOLUME SIX.